UP-TO-DATE SALESMANSHIP

"Is our Salesmanship entirely up-to-date?"

—*Prince of Wales*

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PREFACE

A CLEVER merchant asked me a hard question—"Is there such a thing as 100 per cent. Salesmanship? Have we any rule or Formula by which we can measure the efficiency of the sales process?"

I was obliged to answer—"Yes, there must be such a thing as 100 per cent. Salesmanship, but neither I nor anyone else knows of any Formula by which to measure it."

This was a humiliating confession. I had been for over twenty years a Sales Expert. I had been for three years the Sales Consultant of the Standard Oil Company and the Bell Telephone Company—two of the largest companies in the world. Yet I did not know how to measure the efficiency of a sale.

A short time before I was asked this question, I was engaging a salesman for a certain British company. A young man applied for the job.

"Do you understand Salesmanship?" I asked. "Yes," he replied, "I know it from A to Z."

So, this revealed a strange situation. This young man, who had probably never studied one book on Salesmanship in his life, believed that he knew all about it, while I, who had written nine books on it, did not even know how to define a 100 per cent. sale.

Plainly, all of us who profess to understand Salesmanship, must be talking of something that we do not understand. Plainly, we must begin to study Salesmanship and find out definitely what it means.

Our selling is archaic. It is amateurish. It has not yet become professional. In a word, it is out-of-date. It is not up to the level of our knowledge in other matters of trade and commerce. Certainly, it is not in any sense scientific.

Having made this discovery, which came to me as a shock, I went to work to study and analyze Salesmanship. I took nothing for granted. I studied the sales process, from the point of view of the customer.

The result is—this book. I have now answered the clever merchant. He will receive the first copy that comes from the press.

Here is my RIDSAC FORMULA, by means of which we may now measure the efficiency of a sale.

THE R.I.D.S.A.C. FORMULA

Up-to-Date Salesmanship

Chapter I

THE R.I.D.S.A.C. FORMULA

IN this chapter I shall define the technique of a 100 per cent. sale—a sale that is perfect in all its details.

As you will see, this is something new. It has never been done before. There are now more than eight hundred books on Salesmanship, but not one has laid down a standard by which we may judge the efficiency of the sales process.

Sheldon was the first to attempt it. He gave us his famous "Mental Law of Sale"—favourable attention, interest, desire, action. But this is vague. It is not definite enough to guide a shop assistant or a commercial traveller. It leaves our minds full of questions as to the actual technique of making a sale. It does not tell us how to create favourable attention, nor how to give service to the customer, nor how

to add to the purchases of the customer nor how to terminate the sales process.

What we need is a definite description of what a perfect sales process is, so that we may measure the efficiency of the salesman. We want to know whether the sales process was 10 per cent. efficient, or 30 per cent., or 60 per cent. or 100 per cent. Usually, I regret to say, it is about 20 per cent. efficient. Four-fifths of the work that ought to be done by the salesman is not done.

That is the main reason why customers do not come back. The sales process was defective. The customer was not handled properly. Something was left undone.

It is said that out of every three women who go in a large department store, only one buys. The other two walk out and buy elsewhere. Such a shop, as you can see, is only $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. efficient in making sales. It might, by the highest possible efficiency and completeness of stocks, TREBLE its sales.

There is immense room for improvement in any shop, as every merchant knows. The sales may not be trebled nor doubled, but they can be greatly increased by the perfecting of the selling process. There are amateur sales people

everywhere. They are doing what they have not been trained to do. They are making only twenty or thirty sales out of a possible hundred.

So, what we need is an easily remembered FORMULA, which can be taught to all sales people, and which will give them a correct idea of what the sales process ought to be. Here is such a FORMULA :

A complete sales process consists of the following six elements or stages :

(1) RECEPTION.

(2) INQUIRY.

(3) DISPLAY.

(4) SELECTION.

(5) ADDITION.

(6) COMMENDATION.

The initials of these words, as you see, spell R.I.D.S.A.C.—RIDSAC.

We may call this the RIDSAC FORMULA. It can be used to test the efficiency of every sales person. If everyone of these elements has been in the sales process, the customer will go away pleased and satisfied, and is likely to

come again. The sale was 100 per cent. efficient.

A customer does not know the technique of Salesmanship, but he, or she, knows when the whole sales process has moved along pleasantly. Everyone appreciates technique in any line. An audience of people who cannot play the violin can appreciate the technique of Albert Sandler or Emilio Colombo. An audience that knows nothing of showmanship can appreciate a revue created by Cochran. And a crowd of shoppers who know nothing of Salesmanship can appreciate the technique of well-trained shop assistants.

A woman customer knows when she is being well served and she knows when she is being served clumsily. She knows and feels the difference between the amateur and the professional. And as the same goods can be bought in many shops, she goes where she is sure she will be well served.

A perfect sales process, according to the RIDSAC FORMULA, would be as follows :

(1) RECEPTION. " Good morning, Madam. May I find you a chair ? Let me take your parcel."

(2) INQUIRY. " Did you wish for any

special kind of shoes? Have you had a pair here before? Have you any colour in mind? Do you wish to match a dress?"

(3) DISPLAY. "This pair may suit you. Or, if you wish higher heels, here is one that may do. These are very comfortable. Here is the exact colour."

(4) SELECTION. "You have a small foot, Madam. I should think that these would be large enough. This pair is very much like the pair you have been wearing. I can give you a pair with a different fastening, if you wish."

(5) ADDITION. "If you wish for house slippers to match, this pair would be perfect, wouldn't it? We have the exact shade in hosiery, too—this pair, for instance."

(6) COMMENDATION. "You have made a very good selection, Madam. I am sure that you will be pleased with these. Would you like me to put all your parcels together, so that you can carry them more easily? Good morning, Madam, and thank you very much."

That is an example of a 100 per cent. sales process. The customer was welcomed in a hospitable way when she entered the shop. She was asked as to her wishes. She was

shown the kind of goods she wanted. She was helped in making her selection. She was led to buy a pair of slippers and two pairs of silk stockings. And she was congratulated on having spent her money well.

That customer would go home with the feeling that she had been well served. She would take with her a pleasant memory as well as the goods. Naturally, the next time that she needs a pair of shoes, she will return to this shop and hope that she may be waited upon by the same shop assistant.

That shop assistant had professional skill. She not only sold a pair of shoes. She created a desire for slippers and hosiery, and thereby added 60 per cent. to the amount of the bill. She did far more than this—she created a permanent customer. She added to the assets of the shop.

The amount of her sale slip was only 32s., but that customer will probably spend £10 a year at that shop. The profit on this £10 will not be less than £2, and £2 is the interest, at 5 per cent., on £40. By that one sale she has added £40 to the capital value of the shop. Such is the result of a 100 per cent. sale.

The sales process will be longer in the

selling of a motor-car. It will be shorter in the selling of a pot of jam. But in both cases the procedure will be the same. There will be—

RECEPTION.

INQUIRY.

DISPLAY.

SELECTION.

ADDITION.

COMMENDATION.

Many standard articles are sold quickly without the need of Salesmanship. A man dashes into a tobacconist's for a packet of cigarettes. A woman hurries into a dairy for a pint of milk. A child goes into a sweet-shop for three-pennyworth of toffee. In such cases there need be, and can be, no Salesmanship.

But even in these automatic sales the RIDSAC FORMULA can often be applied. If the man is not in too great a hurry for his cigarettes, he can be shown another brand or be pointed to the cigarette-lighter. If the woman has time enough, she can be shown a tin of peaches. And the child can be given a free sample of another kind of sweets.

In every case there can be RECEPTION, if it

is only a smile without a word. The man in a hurry will not forget the smile. Neither will the woman who has rushed in to buy her milk. Nor the child who has only threepence to spend for toffee.

There need not be any INQUIRY when the customer asks for a standard article and has evidently decided to buy it and nothing else. Neither does the sales person need to help in the SELECTION of the goods. These two are eliminated in the case of automatic sales.

But there can often be ADDITION, unless the customer is in a hurry, or unless the shop is packed with customers. There can often be a wise suggestion of something else. A sales person is not a mere order-taker. And one sale should suggest another.

As to COMMENDATION, this is a matter which must be decided by the nature of the goods. A grocer cannot commend a woman who has bought six pounds of sugar, but he can certainly give her a word when she has bought a jar of good marmalade or a bag of flour.

Whenever a shopkeeper sells any article of noticeably good quality, he should commend his goods and tell their quality-points. He

must do this to prevent the price from appearing excessive. And the most effective time to praise the goods is AFTER they have been bought. Why? Because the praise goes to the buyer for having chosen the goods.

Roughly speaking, this RIDSAC FORMULA can be applied in all shops to the selling of the greater part of the goods. The percentage of exceptions is very small. It could be applied least of all, perhaps, in a grocery shop, for the reason that most customers know precisely what they want. And it could be applied most of all, very likely, in a shop that sells notional or fashionable goods.

A shop is a place where the selling of goods should be done professionally. It seldom is. The sales process is carried through in a bungling way by untrained sales people. Often, the merchant himself knows very little about the technique of selling. In many cases, he even denies that there can be any technique at all.

Usually, the customer receives no RECEPTION that is worthy of the name. No attempt is made to find out what is in his mind. He is shown what he asks for and he is told the price. He can take it or leave it. And the moment that the money is paid, the sales

person loses all interest in the customer. And this stupid muddling goes by the name of Salesmanship.

In manufacturing, we have learned that there is one right way to perform every operation. We have greatly reduced costs by standardizing operations—by creating the one best process by which an article is made. The same fact is equally true of selling, although we have been slow to find this out. There is one best way to sell. There is a process. There is a certain thing to do first. There are six things that must be done in their right order.

Always, the customer must be welcomed and asked questions. Always, there must be a display of the goods and an assistance of the customer to make a satisfactory selection. Always, the telling of price comes after the telling of quality, not before. Always, one sale must be made to lead to another, if possible. And always, there should be a word of commendation to the customer for having chosen wisely.

This is the one best way to make sales and keep customers and create good-will. Any shop that adopted this process—taught it and standardized it, would be sure to prosper,

because it is a sales process that suits and pleases the customer.

It can be used by commercial travellers, too, as well as by shop assistants. In their case, RECEPTION would mean a few words of recognition or friendship or appreciation. There would be INQUIRY, DISPLAY, SELECTION, ADDITION and COMMENDATION. There would be the same friendly endeavour to find out what is in the customer's mind and to sell him what will best suit his trade.

Whether a salesman is selling bridges or cigarettes or railway engines or jewellery, this RIDSAC FORMULA can be applied. I venture to put it forward as a LAW OF SALESMANSHIP. It is based upon the satisfaction of the customer and the net profits of the shop, both. It is Efficiency as applied to the selling goods.

Many books may be written upon this RIDSAC FORMULA. It may be adapted—expanded—modified. But it is here expressed in a simple way that can be easily remembered. In fact, once it is seen, it cannot be forgotten.

Confucius condensed his philosophy into three words. I have not been as successful in

dealing with Salesmanship. But I have at least condensed it into six words :

RECEPTION.

INQUIRY.

DISPLAY.

SELECTION.

ADDITION.

COMMENDATION.

RECEPTION

CHAPTER II

RECEPTION

WE shall now take up, one by one, the six elements of the RIDSAC FORMULA, and deal with them in detail, to show how they can be applied to various kinds of merchandizing. The first of these is RECEPTION.

RECEPTION MEANS THE FIRST LOOK AND GREETING GIVEN TO THE CUSTOMER BY THE MAN AT THE DOOR OF THE SHOP AND BY THE SHOP ASSISTANT OR THE COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER.

In every shop, the first thing is a welcome. A customer must be received as a guest. There must be a spirit of hospitality.

The look and manner and greeting of the shop assistant must say—" We are pleased to see you. You can never come too often. Make yourself at home."

Customers have a right to hospitality. They

are the money-power that pays everyone in the shop. Every shop stands or falls by the opinions and feelings of its customers. They will not go where they are not liked and wanted.

The first impressions of a customer are very important. The first half-minute may make or mar the sale. A customer who is ill at ease is not likely to be pleased with either the goods or the prices.

The vast size of our big department stores makes a friendly reception far more necessary, as many women feel timid and ill at ease when they go into so large a place. The great shop overwhelms them, especially if they live in a small town. They must be made to feel at home.

It may be taken as a rule that whatever decreases a customer's self-respect and ease of mind is likely to prevent a sale, and to prevent the customer from returning gladly to that shop.

In all shops, large and small, there is too much formality and officiousness. There is even dignity, which in most shops is fatal. There is sometimes a Commissionaire at the door, with the manner and aspect of a Drill

Sergeant. He gives orders to timid ladies in military fashion—" First to the right and third on the left." The wonder is that he does not say—" Quick march ! Step lively ! "

This sort of thing may sound brisk and smart, but it is not the way to treat people who may or may not buy goods. It is not good form even in a man's shop to treat a customer as though he were a private in camp. Most of these Sergeants would be much more useful in a warehouse. They should not be allowed to handle the buying public.

A throng of shoppers must not be treated like an Awkward Squad. The selling process must not be militarized. There should be no Sergeants—no snappy orders—no attempt at drill and quick marching. If customers want to drift casually about, let them drift.

The shop assistant must give every customer a smiling welcome. This is a rule that must not for any reason be broken. As the Chinese say—" a shopkeeper must have a smiling face."

In many shops, there are young salesmen who have the manners of a butler—reserved, dignified, conscious of their own importance,

always with a superior air. Such young sprigs have no place behind a counter, meeting the buying public. They should be employed where there are no customers to be pleased and no net profits to be made.

A shop is not a Post Office nor a Whitehall Office nor a country mansion. It is a cheerful friendly place run for the pleasure and service of its customers. It cannot be run by butlers.

What actually happens in many large shops, in the reception of customers, is almost beyond belief. There is often rudeness and ill temper. The shop assistants would seem to belong to a " Customer-Haters' Club."

As an experiment, I went into one large shop in London and recorded, in my note-book, actually what happened.

I went into the shop at 10 a.m. No one paid the slightest attention to me. I asked a girl. She flounced off with a curt answer. I hunted for the Department I wanted and practically compelled a girl to wait on me, which she did while talking to two other girls. I was treated as a trespasser, who had come in the shop too soon.

I went in again at 3 p.m. I asked to look

at a hat in the window. "That's in the window. I haven't time to go for it," snapped a middle-aged woman, with a very irascible manner.

I went in again, another day, to buy a boy's suit. A young man, with a very superior air, showed me some cheap bargains. "I don't want trash. I want something good," I said. The young man was bitterly offended. He showed me the better goods with an air of great dislike. He only spoke when asked a question. The rule in that shop, apparently, is to ostracize a customer who speaks sharply.

Undaunted, I went in this shop once more. I brought an American friend, who wanted a suit for his little son. He had only 10 minutes to wait, as he had an engagement. I told two shop assistants of our hurry. They both replied, resentfully: "Can't you see we're busy?" We went out without buying.

No doubt, this sort of thing is happening in that shop every hour in the day. Customers are being flouted and driven away. The sales people seem to have a chronic dislike of customers. The shop is on one of the busiest streets in London, but its profits are small. Eventually, unless there is a change in management, it will have no profits at all.

There are three times of the day when many shop assistants are lacking in courtesy—during the first hour of the day, when they are busy with their stock; during the rush hours between 12 and 4 o'clock; and during the half hour before closing time.

In many shops, a customer who comes in before 10 a.m. is regarded as a nuisance. The shop assistants are busy in conversation and in rearranging their stock. They do not want to be bothered. They dislike early customers and they show this dislike very plainly.

During the rush hours of the day, there is more excuse for the shop assistants, but they should not allow themselves to become irritable. It has been found that about 70 per cent. of the buying, in a large shop, is done in four hours—between 12 and 4 o'clock. Only 10 per cent. of the sales are made before 11 o'clock. Only 10 per cent. are made between 11 and 12 o'clock, and only 10 per cent. are made after 4 o'clock. The greater part of the selling is done in four busy hours.

During this rush period, many customers are lost. They go elsewhere to buy. Or they do not buy as much as they intended to do. They are apt to be neglected or treated brusquely during this period of congestion.

Consequently, sales people must be trained to use their eyes, and scatter their smiles, when they are over-run with customers. They must not lose their heads and their manners merely because they have a queue.

There is also likely to be an increase in discourtesy at the end of the day. This is natural. The sales people are tired. But it is a serious matter. A customer is liable to be hustled out if she comes in just before closing time. She may be one of the shop's best customers. If she is offended, she may not come again.

It is to be remembered that when a customer comes in at the last minute she is apt to be more in earnest about buying than if she sauntered in at 3 o'clock.

It is very natural for the shop assistants to want to get away as soon as the clock strikes. So, what is to be done ? It might be possible to give a small extra commission or bonus for all sales made in the last half hour. A special coloured sales slip might be used.

Or, if the sales in the last half hour should be increased, some benefit might be conferred upon the shop assistants as a whole. They should have some reward of some kind if

they increase the sales in the last half hour.

At the end of the day their thoughts are wandering. Merchants should think of this. No doubt the end-of-the-day sales might easily be doubled if some special reward were offered.

One fact is clear, that no customer should be greeted at any time of the day with dead eyes, an unsmiling face and a manner of bored indifference or resentment. Customers are not troubles, no matter when they come in. They are what the shop prizes above all else. There can never be too many of them.

We may even go further than this and say that no woman likes to be treated merely as a customer—a spender of money. Above all else, she wants a little personal appreciation. She even craves for a little special attention.

In the famous Marshall Field drapery shop of Chicago—the largest of all American shops, every customer is received with a friendly deference, as though she were a person of special importance. Every woman is treated as she likes to be treated, as though she were a person of distinction in some way. This is one of the secrets of the success of that great shop and of its amazing popularity with

women. There is always a perfect RECEPTION.

An ideal reception of a customer would be as follows—" Good morning, Mrs. Smith. We haven't seen you for quite a while. I've been looking for you. Do you remember that you asked me a month ago for a certain kind of a bag ? I ordered one for you. Here it is. I hope it is what you wanted. If not, I'll just put it into stock."

Mrs. Smith would never forget that reception. It was unexpected. It was personal service. Her wishes had been remembered. That great shop became for the moment HER shop. It listened to her and served her. That little incident, which happens only too rarely, would make her a loyal and permanent patron of that shop, or, at least, of that department.

Always, the first phrase used by the shop assistant is very important. It should not be —" You're next," nor " What do you want ? " nor " Something for you ? " It should be some such phrase as " May I help you ? " or " Is someone helping you ? " or " May I show you some gowns ? " or " May I help you to select something ? "

If a customer has already picked up a jumper, the shop assistant should not mention

the price. That is always the last thing to be mentioned, not the first. She should say—"That is one of the jumpers that we are advertising to-day. We have it in a large variety of colours and sizes." Or she should mention some quality-point of the jumper, so as to enable the customer to better appreciate its value.

A pleasant reception is a sale well begun. It is the thin end of the wedge. It creates favourable attention to both the shop assistant and the goods. It removes any indifference in the mind of the customer.

A very successful salesman says that "it is possible to sell almost anything to almost anybody if you can find the line of least resistance."

He means that there is almost always something in the customer's mind that is favourable to buying. The problem is to find it.

Most of the doors in the customer's mind, that lead to the will, may be locked. But there is almost always one door that is open. The problem is to find it. And the best way to begin to find it is to put the customer at ease by a cordial RECEPTION.

It comes to this, that sales people must

possess social qualities. They must not be shy, dumb, morbid or in any way dislikeable. They must enjoy meeting people. They must make the most of their social opportunities. They must be skilled conversationalists, who know how to begin a conversation with a stranger and carry it through effectively.

An American department store—Abraham & Straus, of Brooklyn—has issued a booklet on "BETTER SELLING" to all its shop assistants. It reminds them that they have a personal capital, certain qualities of body, brain and disposition, that may help them to sell more goods.

Their capital consists of:

(1) A GOOD DISPOSITION. Patience, tact, cheerfulness and a sense of humour are all sales-making qualities.

(2) SELF-CONFIDENCE. A shop assistant acquires this by knowing her goods. She is sure that she can answer the questions of the customers.

(3) GOOD HEALTH. A sales person who has a headache, or who is only half well, will not make a success of selling. One who has only

had four hours' sleep the night before is sure to be a failure.

(4) NEATNESS. Personal appearance counts for much in sales people, and so does the orderliness of the department.

(5) VOCABULARY. Too many shop assistants have only four or five adjectives. They soon wear these out. They should study well-written advertisements and learn how to describe the goods.

(6) ENTHUSIASM. This is a great asset. Many sales are lost because of the dull eyes and listless manner of the sales people.

All these six qualities, as you can see, enable a sales person to be successful in the RECEPTION of a customer. They combine to make a good impression upon the customer's mind, and to make the customer feel at home.

All these suggestions must be borne in mind when a salesman begins a talk with a customer on the telephone. It is impolite and incorrect to begin by asking—"Who are you?" or "What do you want?" or "Have you ever done business with us before?" The polite and correct way to speak is to ask—

" Who is this, please ? " and " Whom do you wish to speak to ? "

The fact is that this idea of RECEPTION has been very poorly appreciated by merchants. Very few shops have any rules about it. Every shop assistant is supposed to know what to do, but very few have been trained. Some sales people are by nature friendly. Most are not. And they have not been told that they must learn the technique of friendliness, in order to be successful in selling.

Not even in hotels, except in Switzerland, is the importance of RECEPTION appreciated. Most hotel-keepers are invisible. The hotel has no Host. It has only a hall porter, head waiter, booking-clerk and cashier. There is no hospitality. Almost every guest is left to the tender mercies of underlings. The hotel is run as though it were a big warehouse full of bedrooms, with a dining-room on the side.

Even in our books and Courses of Study on Salesmanship, this matter of RECEPTION has been neglected. The prevailing theory is that the sales person must plunge at once into the process of selling. This is a mistake. It creates resistance in the mind of the customer. It is not the courteous way. It is not the right way to begin.

Always, courtesy comes first, and courtesy requires that the customer should be received in a friendly and hospitable way, and not merely regarded as a buyer who wants something. The first thing in selling is the personal touch—the cordial smiling RECEPTION of the customer.

INQUIRY

CHAPTER III

INQUIRY

INQUIRY MEANS FINDING OUT WHAT IS IN THE CUSTOMER'S MIND WITH REGARD TO THE GOODS THAT THE SHOP ASSISTANT WISHES TO SELL.

The second step in a correct sales process is for the shop assistant or traveller to put himself on the side of the customer and become for the moment the buying agent of the customer. This at once prevents antagonism and friction. It prevents what we call buyer-resistance. The customer and the sales person, together, proceed to find out what the customer wants.

Such is good Salesmanship, as I teach it, and as we prefer it, in the British Isles. As you can see, it is entirely different from the forced selling that has become so prevalent in the United States. It is the opposite of overpowering sales-talks and aggressive selling. It changes the sales process from a debate to a

shop to buy a tie. I wanted a certain kind of tie—grey with a dark red thread and made of a soft silk.

Once, in Newcastle, I bought such a tie, and it wore long and looked well. It did not show the marks of the tie-pin, and it did not wrinkle into a rope, as most ties do.

Also, I wanted to ask about poplin ties. I once bought one in Belfast and liked it very much. It was ideal for summer, as it was so light.

So I went into the shop, sat down, and started to tell my long-winded story of ties. But I didn't get very far with it.

The young man behind the counter saw no reason why he should listen to my tale. As soon as he caught the word "ties," he threw several boxes of ties on the counter.

I still persisted in babbling about my desire for a grey silk tie with a red thread. But the young man paid no attention. He only threw down more boxes. "These are the latest styles," he said, with a crushing air of finality.

He wouldn't listen. He might as well have been deaf. It was not at all his duty to listen to customers, in his opinion. It was his duty

to throw down boxes, to wrap the ties up, to put the boxes back.

At once I resolved not to buy. Deaf shops should not be encouraged. But I picked up several ties out of the boxes and made an experiment. Perhaps, I thought, this young man is a bad listener but a good talker. Perhaps he can describe the good qualities of his ties in such a way that I will be obliged, in all fairness, to buy one of them.

"Where was this tie made?" I asked. He stared at me as though I had asked for a guinea. In a voice that was husky with indignation, he replied that he did not know.

Plainly, in his opinion, I was not playing cricket. I had no right, he felt, to expect him to converse about his goods.

He was not there to listen nor to talk. He was not supposed to enter into conversation. He was supposed to be deaf and dumb, in charge of certain boxes filled with ties, shirts, collars, etc. So I bought nothing and walked out.

Is it not true that this sort of thing is happening every day in many shops? Is it not true that there are thousands of deaf and dumb shops, in which there is neither con-

sideration for the customer nor knowledge of the goods ?

Strictly speaking, they are not shops at all. They are mere storage warehouses—mere depôts or depositories. Such shops do not really sell goods. They only wrap them up and give you back the change. There is no salesmanship—no courtesy—no service. In a real shop there is conversation and plenty of it. There are no deaf and dumb people behind the counter. A customer is listened to and talked to, to his heart's content.

LISTEN ! That is part of the technique of Salesmanship. The first thing is not to show goods. It is to ask questions and listen. As many sales are made by the ear as by the tongue. And better sales. A customer who has been treated courteously and listened to, goes home well pleased.

If a shop assistant could only be a mind-reader, her task would be easier and her success would be amazing. As she is not, she must ask questions. Every customer is more or less of a mystery. Certainly, every stranger is. Instead of blundering ahead in the dark, she must find out the motives that have brought the customer to her counter.

Fortunately, almost everyone likes to answer questions about his likes and dislikes. It puts him at once in a pleasant frame of mind. Everybody loves a good listener. The person whom we call a " bore " in social life, is the one who talks about himself and who does not listen when you talk about yourself.

A customer, if I may say so, is like a barrel. You must empty him before you can fill him. Many customers have a story to tell. Let them tell it. The listening time will be time well spent. Often, a woman goes home and says—" the girl snapped me up so quickly that I hadn't time to explain. I'm quite sure that I have bought the wrong thing."

It may be said that some customers know definitely what they want, some know vaguely and some do not know at all. But all three classes of customers like to be asked as to their wishes. All three classes appreciate the courtesy of being asked what they have in mind. They realize that the shop assistant is beginning the sales process in the right professional way.

Practically every customer has likes and dislikes. Almost everyone has had some previous experience—" I bought one once,"

etc. Also, it helps to clear a customer's thoughts to talk for a minute or two on the subject of the goods. It enables the customer to give a more definite order, which is helpful to the shop assistant.

Many a customer is prevented from buying by being shown the wrong goods first. If a woman prefers grey and the shop assistant shows her brown, that is a bad start. The customer is displeased. She feels that she is not being served properly.

A man went into a furniture dealer's to buy a £90 suite of furniture which he had already looked at, and which he had decided to buy. The salesman, as soon as he heard the words " suite of furniture," showed him another suite at £65. He praised this suite as being the best value in the house. For ten minutes the customer had no chance to explain. Then he said: " I had made up my mind to buy that suite in the window at £90."

The salesman was taken aback. He tried to explain that the £90 suite was worth the difference. But it was too late. The customer went off without buying. He was unsold.

For lack of a very little knowledge of salesmanship the salesman had lost a £90 sale.

Often, a weak-willed customer can be made to buy something he had never intended to buy, and did not want, but this is not a case of good Salesmanship. It is the reverse. It is the worst possible kind of selling.

In an American novel, entitled *Meet Mr. Huckabee*, the hero is a salesman. When he was asked what he regarded as his masterpiece in the great art of salesmanship, he replied :

" I think that I scored my top notch when I succeeded in selling a steam-plough to a confectioner."

As you can see, this is not salesmanship at all. Pushing something on a man that he does not want is certainly not salesmanship. I would call it a dirty trick. Also, I would call it very shortsighted and foolish, as it would prevent him from ever selling anything to that man in the future. Where you have to kill the customer to make the sale, you had better not make the sale at all. Always save the customer at the expense of the sale.

A shop assistant must study people. The face and the dress of the customer should be keenly noticed. An old-fashioned person will

prefer old-fashioned goods. A man with a loud tie will want another loud tie. A well-dressed girl of eighteen will want to see the most fashionable goods that she can afford.

As yet, no authoritative book has been written on the psychology of customers. Katherine Blackford studied 12,000 people before she wrote her Course of Study on Character Analysis. But no one, thus far, has studied the psychology of 12,000 customers. Some day this will be done and the results will be very valuable.

It will be very useful when we know, with scientific accuracy, how the customer's mind re-acts to the selling process—how there comes finally the decision to buy. We know this now partially, but not completely. In the whole world there is no one, as yet, who is an authority upon the psychology of customers. We have only recently begun to study the subject at all.

We are now beginning to study motives. We want to know what it is that most influences the will. Why do people buy? What are the inducements that move them to spend money?

Professor John Clark says that there are 7

reasons why people buy. They are as follows :

(1) MONEY. When the purchaser buys something because it will mean money to him.

(2) HAPPINESS AND CONTENTMENT. Where goods are bought which contribute to the happiness, health or peace of mind of the purchaser.

(3) AFFECTION. Where the purchaser buys to protect or benefit others.

(4) VANITY. Here, according to his character and intelligence, the purchaser buys from motives that are worthy or foolish.

(5) SENTIMENT. Merchandise bought to help along a good cause.

(6) CURIOSITY. The purchase of novelties mainly in order to see what they are like.

(7) GOOD TASTE. Not a primary reason, but a contributing one which is greatly strengthened by a sales presentation which is also in good taste.

A shop assistant must ask questions to find out which of these motives is impelling the customer to buy. Once she knows this, she can strengthen the motive. The motive is on

her side. As soon as she finds it out, she is no longer in the dark. She knows what to show and what to say.

This element of INQUIRY means the study of markets, too, as well as of individual customers. Tens of thousands of pounds are now being spent on Market Research by large manufacturers, who have grappled efficiently with the difficulties of Salesmanship.

Questionnaires are now being sent out to prospective customers and to dealers, asking as to what they prefer. Canvassers are being sent from door to door, to find out the preferences of housewives.

This has proved to be very profitable. It has enabled manufacturers to correct their mistakes and to make their goods more saleable and attractive. One manufacturer of a dish-washing machine, for instance, whose sales had fallen off, employed door to door canvassers to find out the reason. He found out that women did not like his machine because it was difficult to clean. He promptly redesigned it. He made it self-cleaning. And his sales greatly increased.

When the Standard Oil Company found that its sales of oil were not increasing rapidly

in China, it sent inquiries to find out the reason. These inquirers went into the houses of the Chinese people. They found that the lamps that were in use in China were of the old-fashioned smoky sort. They were ill-smelling and flickering and no kind of oil could burn in them well. Also, they found out that the Chinese could not afford to pay more than fourpence for a lamp.

The Standard Oil Company at once made 750,000 lamps that were good and cheap. These lamps cost nearly sixpence to make, but they were sold for less than fourpence apiece. The company made a loss of over £5,000 in order to gain 750,000 steady customers. Rather, it made an investment of £5,000. It secured 750,000 customers for less than twopence apiece. This was a striking instance of the value of INQUIRY.

A certain motor-car company, which did not appreciate the importance of INQUIRY, went into the South American market with motor-cars that were painted black and dark blue. They found that the South Americans preferred red cars. The salesmen of the company insisted that red is not a suitable colour for motor-cars. They pointed out the superiority of dark blue and black. And the

result was that the South Americans turned their backs on the sombre dark blue and black cars and bought red cars from another company. That, too, was a striking instance of the value of INQUIRY.

In all foreign trade, the secret of success is the study of the market. It has never been as important as it is to-day, as there are so many manufacturers in the field. If we say to a foreign people to-day—"Take it or leave it," they leave it. They buy from those who have first made an inquiry as to what they want.

It may be taken for granted that no one can know the point of view of another person without asking him questions. A manufacturer may make something that pleases himself and his foremen and his workmen, but which the general public will refuse to buy. The only way to be sure is to first find out the wishes and whims of the public.

A certain paint manufacturer woke up several years ago to find out that he did not know very much about the paint market in general. He had never made a study of his customers. He had never thought of the new art of INQUIRY.

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So, to begin with, he sent a list of five questions to a thousand big industrial companies. He asked them :

(1) For what purposes do you use paint ?

(2) Do you buy paint ready mixed or is it mixed on the job ?

(3) How much did you buy last year ?

(4) Do you use paint-spraying machinery ?

(5) Do you use paint for lighting conditions and sanitary reasons ?

He received answers to these questions from 572 manufacturers. He found out, to his amazement, that five of these companies had spent £20,000 in the previous year for paint.

He found that two companies had spent more than £10,000, and that 13 companies had spent more than £5,000.

Altogether the 572 manufacturers had spent nearly £500,000 for paint in a single year.

He found that 60 per cent. of them bought their paint ready mixed, 7 per cent. mixed their own paint on the job, and 33 per cent. did both.

He found that comparatively few of them used paint-spraying devices.

He found that in almost every firm there was one trained technical man who was the paint buyer for the firm.

Then he made a wider study of the uses of paint. He discovered that about 46 per cent. of all the paint used is used by industrial firms.

He then worked out a plan for a sales campaign. He called his travellers in, told them the new facts that he had discovered, and trained them. He arranged to have special paint exhibits in the larger cities. He had new booklets written from the point of view of the trained technical paint buyer.

He prepared a Paint Manual—a large book of 250 pages. He put a 10s. price on this book. But he sent it free to the paint buyers of the larger industrial firms.

Then he bought a paint-spraying device. He improved it and put it on the market. He sold it at a low price, as a special service to paint-users.

As a result, he has greatly increased his sales. He found that he had not even scratched

the industrial market for paint. He had been neglecting the biggest users. He now has one of the most successful paint factories in the world, and all his success is due to his sudden discovery of the value of INQUIRY.

It was this method of INQUIRY, too, which created the success of Mr. E. M. Statler, who afterwards became the greatest hotel-keeper in the world. When he died, in 1927, he was managing a chain of hotels worth more than £10,000,000.

His hotels have 12,000 bedrooms, and every bedroom has a bath. More than that, his hotels are noted all over the United States as being the most comfortable, the most courteous and hospitable that the United States has ever known.

Statler's main idea was just this—that a hotel should be a home and more than a home. Every guest in his hotels was addressed by name, as soon as he had registered.

Other hotels have rules, but Statler broke every rule to give a guest what he wanted. He made it a point to cater to unreasonable people. As he said once: "Most people are reasonable, but the success of a hotel is measured by the manner in which it caters for the unreasonable man."

Every guest in one of his hotels found a morning paper pushed under the door. When Statler decided to do this he had to have 1,500 doors taken off their hinges and cut down.

He noticed, once, that his guests liked to sit with their arms entwined about the backs of their chairs when they were talking. So he ordered the backs of all his dining-room chairs made low and without knobs at the end.

Another time he found that the guests had trouble to fit the keys into the keyholes, because the keyholes were below the door-knobs. So he had all the keyholes put above the door-knobs.

He noticed that most guests disliked tipping a boy for bringing up a jug of drinking water. So he installed running ice-water in every room. He put needles and thread and buttons in every bedroom. He supplied matches and ash-trays. He printed his menus in English as well as in French. All his employees were trained in the art of courtesy and service.

He was not a financier nor a man of great abilities as an organizer. But he studied his guests. His whole life was an INQUIRY as to how guests could be made more welcome and comfortable in a hotel. As you may imagine,

his hotels were always full. And he became very well satisfied with his life, as well as very wealthy.

To give one more example, a certain house agent—Mr. Frank McGuire, applied the method of INQUIRY to the selling of houses. He studied the psychology of his customers. He asked questions and classified the answers. He found out many interesting and valuable facts.

A man, he says, thinks first of accessibility. He wants to know how long it will take him to get to his work. A woman does not think of this.

Next, a man thinks of value. He wants to know if he is getting full value for his money.

Third, a man thinks of construction—is the house well built—what materials have been used, etc.

Fourth, he thinks of cost of maintenance. One man wants a large garden, while another wants a small one.

Fifth, he wants a retreat—a den or study or workshop for himself.

Sixth, he thinks of enlargements—how the

house can be made bigger or altered in some way, to carry out some scheme of his own.

A woman, says McGuire, looks at a house quite differently from a man.

First of all, she considers the environment. She looks at her neighbours. She wants to know what kind of people she will be living with. The man is not likely to think of this.

Second, she considers cleanliness, which few men ever think of. She looks to see if it will be an easy house to keep clean. A house ought always to be made spick and span, says McGuire, before it is shown to a woman.

Third, a woman considers convenience in the arrangement of the house. Will it save steps, she asks. Women with children always want two bedrooms adjoining, so as to have the children near.

Fourth, she wants plenty of closets, which few builders ever think of. She can never have too many closets. Above all, she would like a closet with a window in it or with electric light.

Fifth, she considers adaptability—will the house suit the family? Sometimes she wants it to fit her furniture.

Then, sixth, she considers value. She would like to know that it is a bargain. That is why McGuire often advertises a £1,000 house for £995. The hardest house to sell, says McGuire, is a fine house in a poor neighbourhood. A woman will not have it at any price.

As a result of his INQUIRY into the wishes of house-hunters, Mr. McGuire has built up one of the largest house-selling agencies. He employs a hundred salesmen. He has sold £7,000,000 worth of houses to 12,000 families in eight years. And it all began with the study of the wishes of house-buyers.

So, this method of INQUIRY can be adopted by manufacturers, merchants and selling agents. It applies to all manner of selling, except when the customer wants a standardized article and asks for it by name. It can be used to sell either bridges or chocolates.

An up-to-date manufacturer now says to a customer—"Let us work out your problem." He says to his travelling salesmen—"Go and study what the customer wants. Advise him honestly and fairly. Don't merely try to push goods on him. Don't oversell him, else we are likely to lose him as a customer. Find out his problem and help him to solve it."

An up-to-date merchant says to his sales people—"always find out what is in the customer's mind. Ask questions. Listen carefully to what the customer says. Never disregard any expressed wish. Advise but do not contradict. Co-operate with the customer. Always begin the sale from the customer's point of view."

Eventually, a competent salesman or shop assistant creates a large number of regular customers. He becomes a CONSULTANT. This is the highest rank among salesmen.

His customers ask his advice. They trust him. They buy on his opinion. They treat him as though he were a partner. It takes some time for a salesman to reach this high point. But many do.

Once a salesman becomes a consultant, selling is an easy and pleasant job. There is no friction — no clashing — no "buyer resistance."

Just as there are degrees in Masonry, so there are degrees in Salesmanship; and a Salesman has taken the highest degree when his customers regard him as a consultant and follow his opinion when they buy.


DISPLAY

CHAPTER IV

DISPLAY

DISPLAY MEANS PUTTING THE GOODS BEFORE THE CUSTOMER IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY WILL ATTRACT THE CUSTOMER'S FAVOURABLE ATTENTION.

The shop assistant may often, after the INQUIRY, be able to say—"Oh, yes, I think we have exactly what you want." The sale is then likely to be made quickly and to the satisfaction of the customer.

If the customer's mind is vague as to what she wants, then several varieties must be shown. It is not a wise policy to show too many varieties at first, as the customer's mind is likely to be confused. But a shop assistant must show everything, if the customer still remains in doubt.

The problem of DISPLAY is how to make the customer appreciate the value and desirability of the goods. In order to do this, the

shop assistant must know the goods and show a keen interest in displaying them. The customer is not likely to be any more appreciative or enthusiastic than the shop assistant is.

The quality-points must be mentioned, not the price. The price should be told last of all, or when the customer asks for it. Usually, the price is marked on the goods and does not need to be hurled at the customer.

There are, I believe, nine points of quality in a good collar, for instance. The shop assistant should know these and show them to the customer. All well-made goods have quality-points. If these are not mentioned, the price is likely to seem too high. Thousands of sales are lost daily because the sales people do not know what the quality-points are. They have not been told, and they are not sufficiently interested to find out.

If the goods are of low quality—if they have no quality-points, then nothing but the price can be mentioned. The argument of cheapness should then be emphasized.

At times, there is a single quality-point that makes the goods seem to be well worth the price. If, in showing a book, the salesman can say—" the fifth chapter alone is worth

the money," he will very likely sell it. Or if, in showing a gown, the shop assistant can say—"the embroidery alone looks as if it were worth the price," the customer will not think that the gown is expensive.

To talk about goods is not as effective as to display them in an interesting way. It is easier to sell to the eye than the ear. Why? Because the optic nerve is twenty-two times stronger than the nerve that leads from the ear to the brain. A customer is often oblivious to what is being said by the sales person, but she is keenly aware of what she is looking at. That is why DISPLAY is so important. We must sell to the eye.

A shop should be well lighted. We now have meters that measure the amount of light in a building, and it has been found that there are very few daylight shops. They are dim—half-lit. Few shops are well lit by their windows, as the windows are full of goods. They need artificial light and plenty of it.

Lighting is a matter that has been greatly neglected by shop-keepers. There are many twilight shops. No shop is as well lit as the stage of a theatre. We are only beginning to appreciate the value of an abundance of light in the display of goods.

There are too many glass counters, especially in jewellery shops. When a ring or a brooch is being shown, it has to compete with a hundred glints, from what is underneath the glass counter. The proper method of display is to unroll half a yard of purple velvet and to place the articles being shown on it. This makes better visibility.

The best system of lighting, in the selling of goods, is that used by the auctioneers who sell oil paintings. One painting is placed upon an easel, above which there are covered lights. The room is in semi-darkness and a flood of light is on the picture and nowhere else. The picture stands out vividly in the darkened room. No other picture can be seen. This greatly enhances the value of the picture. No doubt, it helps very much to increase the price which the auctioneer obtains for it.

The vividness with which an article is seen depends upon the lighting. This fact has not, as yet, been appreciated by merchants. There seems to be no good reason why spot-lights should not be used in the display of goods. Eventually, I have no doubt, there will be sunlight shops. There will be the perfect lighting of noonday, instead of the dimness and half-light that is universal to-day.

Another principle of DISPLAY is that the goods, if possible, should be kept moving. They should not be laid upon the counter as though they were dead cats. Anything moving attracts the eye. It compels attention. The goods should be kept in motion until the customer picks them up. Once they are in the customer's hands, they are sure of attention.

The shop assistant should say—"Try it, Madam." The customer should always be induced to take part in the demonstration. If a salesman is showing an arm-chair, he should say—"Will you please sit in it, Madam?" If he is showing a pram, he should say—"Try it and see how easily it is pushed, Madam."

Whenever possible, the sale should be dramatized. Three minutes of movement is worth ten minutes of talk. Salesmanship is largely showmanship. The salesmen who sell motor-cars, cash registers and vacuum cleaners have learned this fact, but most sales people are not yet aware of it.

There must be action. A sales person must be active, not inert. To be inert causes the customer to hesitate. An indifferent shop assistant makes an indifferent customer. Indifference and enthusiasm are contagious.

When the shop assistant does nothing and says nothing, the customer's mind begins to wander. The interest in the goods stops. It is as though the shop assistant said—" I'm sorry, but that is all we have. It isn't much. You can very likely find something to suit you better in some other shop."

Whenever possible, the goods should be shown in use. This is always the best possible method of display. It explains the success of the salesmen who sell motor-cars, cash registers and vacuum cleaners. This method can be greatly extended. Even tailors now have dummy figures that show what a cloth will look like when made into a suit. Even grocers, when they are selling a better brand of pickles, can have a jar open and offer regular customers a taste of their quality.

A large department store in California has hit upon a new idea—it has built a platform on the ground floor for the purpose of displaying any new line of goods.

The platform is well built, with ornamental posts. It is covered with linoleum. It is especially well lit. There is a big sign above it—DEMONSTRATION PLATFORM.

The advantages of this platform are as follows :

(1) It provides a definite place for demonstrations and prevents the rest of the shop from being messed about.

(2) It enables a much larger number of people to see the demonstration.

(3) It makes the demonstration seem much more impressive. It is like a show given on the stage of a theatre. The entertainment value is vastly increased.

(4) It has a good advertising value. Customers talk about it. When a new demonstration is advertised, they flock in crowds.

(5) It is a shop within a shop. It stands out conspicuously above the counters and tables. It cannot be overlooked.

The first merchant in any town who would be first to have a Demonstration Platform would score one on all his competitors.

One point to remember is that when a demonstration is held in a shop, it should be supervised and controlled by the Manager of the shop. It should not be given by an unsupervised sales person who is employed by a manufacturer. A demonstrator from an outside firm is likely to force sales and annoy customers. As he is paid on commission, he

is likely to thrust his goods upon people, and the good-will of the customers is likely to be lost.

As far as possible, customers should be allowed to make their own demonstrations. The goods should be put within easy reach. They should not be kept out of reach in drawers and glass cases. Customers love a shop in which the goods are accessible. They do not like a shop that is run like a Museum.

An ironmonger once tried an experiment. He bought a large number of handsome glass cases and put his goods in them. Result—the shop looked as neat as a pin, but the sales fell off.

Then he went to the other extreme. He got rid of his glass cases and put his goods on tables and counters within reach of his customers. Result—his sales doubled.

"We now let our customers stroll all over the shop," he says. "We let them handle the goods. They very evidently prefer this, as they now buy twice as much as they did when we put the goods out of reach."

It has been found, too, that the best selling-spot in a shop is a spot, about 5 feet square, 6 or 7 steps from the main entrance. These

25 square feet, it is said, can be made to pay 10 per cent. of the rent of the shop, if the shop is not too large.

We have now fairly well learned that goods should be put up, whenever possible, in pretty packages. This improvement was first introduced by Cadbury's in England and by Robert Gair in the United States. Goods in decorative packages become self-selling. The DISPLAY is on the package.

More and more use should be made of decorative boxes and containers of all sorts. Customers have learned to expect the box or wrapper to be worthy of the goods. There is no good reason why boots and shoes and corsets and real lace handkerchiefs and many other things should not be sold in handsome boxes that would emphasize their value. Too many shops spoil their appearance by having the shelves filled with ugly boxes and goods wrapped in brown paper.

Some progressive manufacturers are now attaching Quality Cards to their goods. These help to make them self-selling. Sometimes they contain a Guarantee as to quality or durability. Sometimes they consist merely of slogans or other advertising phrases. These

Quality Cards assist the sales person. They help to influence the mind of the customer. They improve the DISPLAY.

Here are a few instances of unusual and effective displays, which show how the sales process can be improved by a better showing of the goods :

(1) The curtain department in one big department store sold 20,000 pairs of curtains in four days. The secret of the success of this sale was the interior display. The department was divided into broad aisles, with curtains drapped on either side.

The curtains were all in full view—samples of every style. The idea of the Manager was that a curtain can best be appreciated by a woman when she sees it at full length.

Also, they were displayed on dummy window frames and hung on brass rods, so that a customer could see exactly how they would look in her home.

(2) A progressive dealer in electrical goods has greatly increased the sale of electric globes by a simple plan, which has cost him only £20.

He has put decorative arches at the top of his shelves, and as a fringe on the lower part

of these arches he has put 75 electric globes —one each of every variety that he carries in stock.

Every customer is compelled to see these 75 globes. At a glance he can see the ones that he needs. The display is very impressive. And it is high out of the way. No shelf space or counter space is used for it.

He has used light plywood for the arches and painted them grey. The colour scheme of his shop is grey, orange and black. The 75 globes are wired up, so that a demonstration of the light can be made in a moment.

(3) The need of display for electric lamps was proved by a large department store. Previously, no special effort had been made to push the sale of these lamps. It was taken for granted that when a customer wanted a lamp, he would ask for one.

But one of the managers in this shop had a bright idea. He said: "More than half of our customers do need electric lamps. But they forget to buy them. We must remind them that they need the lamps and many of them will buy them."

So, a special table was arranged on the first floor. It was lit up by lights in four colours—

white, green, red and blue. A highly-skilled sales girl was put in charge. As a result, the sales of electric lamps were increased 250 per cent.

The shop discovered that about half of the customers are really prospects, but they need to be reminded. When they are shopping, they forget about the lamps.

In almost every home that has electric light, there are empty lamp sockets. If a lamp goes out in the drawing-room, another one is borrowed from the bedroom, and so on. Very few homes keep a reserve of lamps.

Most shops that sell electric lamps regard them as a staple commodity, like sugar or soap. This is not true. People do not buy lamps as soon as they need them. They need to be reminded. This was an illustration of the value of DISPLAY.

(4) Furniture shops, especially, need display facilities. The average furniture shop is little more than a warehouse. The furniture is heaped and crammed together. There are usually very narrow aisles between the stacks of furniture, also many furniture shops are not clean. There is dust on the furniture and there is litter in the corners. They are often

dimly lighted, too. Sometimes there is not half enough light.

The right way to sell furniture is to have clean, well-lit rooms, not overcrowded. There should always be an open space in the centre of every room so that the furniture can be arranged as it will appear in the customer's home. In a word, a furniture shop should be as home-like as possible.

One furniture shop solved its problem of DISPLAY by having a Furniture-placing Contest. It gave away a couple of cut-out cards. One was a card of a living room and the other a card of a dining-room. On the cards were pictures of furniture. The first prize was given to the one who cut out furniture and pasted it in in such a way as to make a well-furnished room.

There were 5,000 competitors. A great interest was created in the right way to furnish a living room or a dining room. The two winning cards were framed and placed in the window, and created a great deal of attention. They were also shown in large advertisements in the daily press.

Fifty pounds were given away in prizes, and the contest was found to be well worth the

money. Sales were increased. It was found that 75 per cent. of the competitors were actual furniture prospects.

By this means, the customers were led to be interested in furniture and how to arrange it. They talked about it in their homes. They took part in a contest of Display.

(5) Another furniture dealer found a way to solve his selling problem in a more dramatic and sensational way. He wanted to sell more mattresses. He first made an INQUIRY to discover why people bought so few mattresses. He found that the main reason was that people used mattresses too long. They did not know that an old mattress is a carrier of disease germs.

So, he told the people of his town, in his advertisements, that 75 per cent. of their old mattresses ought to be burned and not re-covered. Then he offered to allow 20s. for every old double mattress and 10s. for every single mattress, to customers who would buy his new mattresses.

In this way he bought 700 old mattresses. On Guy Fawkes Night—November 5th—he had these old mattresses taken to the top of a hill near the town. They were saturated with oil and burned.

It was the biggest bonfire that the people of the town had ever seen. There were 4,000 people at the fire. After the fire, there was a display of fireworks.

It was a good advertising stunt. Better still, it was educational. It taught people that every old mattress ought to be burned. It taught them to appreciate new, clean, sanitary mattresses. That was a very impressive instance of DISPLAY.

(6) An ironmonger solved his DISPLAY problem by making his shop attractive to women. First he made an INQUIRY, and found out that 85 per cent. of his goods were bought by women. This was a great surprise to him.

He engaged a woman to write his advertisements and another woman to dress his windows. He engaged at least one woman in every department, even in the department that sold paint and building materials. He made his shop bright with colour and kept his goods shining and clean.

Also, as he learned that women love demonstrations, he had one every week. He had a washing-machine demonstrated by a woman, not a man, as a man knows little about washing.

He had a gas range demonstrated by a woman, as a man knows nothing about cooking. In every way, he made his shop attractive to women and as a result he greatly increased his trade. He concentrated his attention on better DISPLAY.

These six examples show that DISPLAY is no small thing. It does not mean pulling an article out of a shelf and putting it on a counter. It requires thought—skill—action—efficiency. No one can qualify as a salesman until he has mastered the problem of DISPLAY.

SELECTION

CHAPTER V

SELECTION

SELECTION MEANS HELPING THE CUSTOMER TO MAKE A WISE CHOICE, SO THAT THE CUSTOMER MAY BE WELL PLEASED AND SO THAT THE GOODS WILL NOT BE RETURNED.

SELECTION is a better word than selling. Selling has come to mean a pressure upon the customer. Selling means the point of view of the shop, not the customer. But in this book I am giving a new and better definition of Salesmanship. I am pointing out that in a 100 per cent. selling process there is no pressure—no conflict. There is a co-operation. The sales process should be conducted from the point of view of the customer and the shop, both.

SELECTION is a word that means mutual help in a task that concerns two people, whose interests in the long run are identical. It does not mean the forcing of an article upon an

unwilling customer. It is the new idea of what a successful sale ought to be.

Good selling means "we," not "you" and "I." The shop assistant says to the customer—"let us see if we can find exactly what you want." Then there is a search. They look at the stock together. The customer knows best what she wants and the shop assistant knows best where the stock is and what the quality points are.

For the time being, the shop assistant becomes the customer's assistant. Two heads are better than one. They co-operate for a double purpose—the profit of the shop and the satisfaction of the customer. That is the meaning of SELECTION.

In the selling process, there should be no friction—no clash—no argument. The argumentative salesman is obsolete—as obsolete as a quill pen. Once, I heard a salesman in a London shop say to a customer—"You can't deny that, can you?" What could have been worse, from any point of view, than that?

Many sales people, and merchants as well, have a wholly wrong conception of their work. They regard themselves as the champions of their goods. They are aggressive. They

regard the selling process as a battle of wits. A sale means that they have won a victory. Actually their purpose is to defeat a customer. What could be more suicidal than this ?

The problem of SELECTION is how to pick out the article that will please the customer most and at a suitable price. In order to have this done, there must be first INQUIRY and DISPLAY. The shop assistant who neglects to ask questions and to display the goods well is not likely to suit the customer in the selection of the goods.

It goes without saying that the customer must be pleased. The test of a good sales process is—what does the customer say when she goes home ? This is more important than making the sale. An immediate sale is a temporary advantage, but a satisfied customer is a permanent asset.

If the shop does not contain what the customer wants, no second-best should be pushed forward. She may, perhaps, be persuaded to buy something of better quality. She may be wise to do this. Or, if she is not in a hurry for the article, it may be ordered and sent to her as soon as possible. But if the customer is in a hurry, and wants a certain

thing and no other, there can be no sale. The customer must try another shop.

In order to have a SELECTION made wisely, the shop assistant must know the customer and the goods, both. She learns about the customer by a keen INQUIRY, and she learns the facts about her goods by studying them and asking the departmental buyer for information.

A large department store in New York—Macy's—once offered a prize of a silver cup and £30 for the most efficient shop assistant. It was won by a Miss Frances Schrader. She was found to be the most efficient of 9,000 shop assistants. And the secret of her success was that she remembered the wishes of her customers and knew how to select goods that would please them.

She was found to have an exceptionally good memory. She could address many of her customers by name. She is very quick. She can serve several customers at once, yet she does not miss giving a smile and a word to each one. She puts into practice the RIDSAC FORMULA. She does not forget RECEPTION, INQUIRY, DISPLAY, SELECTION, ADDITION and COMMENDATION. And she can carry

through the whole sales process very rapidly.

The more a shop assistant knows of human nature, the better it is for the process of SELECTION. If a gift is being selected, the shop assistant should know that a man likes best a gift that he can use, while a woman always wants something decorative or ornamental.

If you want to please a man, you must give him a diary or a fountain pen or a couple of ties or a box of handkerchiefs. And if you want to please a woman, you must give her a dozen roses or a vase or a pearl brooch or some other such thing. A man likes something useful and a woman likes a surprise.

A shop assistant must know that a man thinks in terms of efficiency and economy, while a woman thinks of her family, her home and herself. As for young people, they think most of pleasure, sport, friends and the fashion.

One very successful outfitter always puts this phrase in his advertisements—"Bring Your Wife Along." He makes his shop attractive to women. He gives every woman visitor a handsome little powder-box.

He wants a wife to come because he knows that the selection of the cloth and the style

will be made more satisfactorily. He knows that if a wife helps her husband to buy his suit of clothes or his ties or his collars, the man will be better satisfied.

Women are better buyers than men. Most women are much more interested in their husbands' appearance than their husbands themselves are. And women are very pleased to be invited.

When a man goes alone to buy a suit, he buys it as quickly as he can. His one idea seems to be to be in and out of the shop in ten minutes. This does not help him to buy the kind of suit that will please him best.

But, when he takes his wife, he stays longer. The buying of the suit becomes a pleasant social event. Naturally, when he wants to buy another suit, he and his wife go back to the shop where they had such a pleasant experience.

A woman buys more carefully and conscientiously than a man does. She feels herself to be the guardian of the family purse. She wants to buy well and to be able to justify her expenditure when she shows her purchases to her family circle. That is why she welcomes a friendly assistance in making her selection.

If an unwise selection is made, the goods

are likely to be returned. The percentage of goods returned in the United States has risen to 4 per cent. Out of every twenty-five articles sold, one comes back. This greatly increases the expenses of selling. Also, it destroys the good-will of the customer, which is a far more serious matter.

A large department store recently made an investigation to see why goods were returned by customers. Here are the results :

More than 38 per cent. of the goods came back because they were wrong size ; 35 per cent. came back because the customers had changed their minds ; 5 per cent. came back because of defective merchandize ; 6 per cent. came back because of the wrong colour ; and 2 per cent. came back because of some mistake in delivery.

In general, it appeared that about half of the goods came back because of some mistake on the part of the shop, and the other half came back because of some change of mind on the part of the customer.

As you can see, the main cause for the return of all the goods was a failure in the process of SELECTION. The sale, very likely, was made in too great a hurry. No time was

saved. All the time was worse than wasted, as the goods were returned. The sale was not made according to the RIDSAC FORMULA. There was not enough INQUIRY. There was, probably, a hasty or indifferent DISPLAY. This caused a wrong SELECTION and consequently the goods came back.

In the beginning of the sales process, the shop assistant asks questions, but in the selecting of the goods, it is the customer who asks the questions. The shop assistant must be ready with the answers. She must know her goods.

If the goods being shown are of high quality, the shop assistant must be able to give a reason for the price. The shop assistant is responsible if the price appears to the customer to be too high. Also, if the price is very low, a reason must be given, else customers will think that they are being offered rubbish. Always, the price, whatever it is, must be explained.

Very often, the sales people themselves think that the prices are too high. They are apt to be apologetic. They mention the price timidly, as though they were afraid it would prevent the sale. This is fatal. But it is done thousands of times a day.

On one occasion, I went into a florist's. "How much for a dozen of these roses?" I asked. "Four shillings," the sales girl replied, dubiously. "But," she said, "I can sell them to you for fourpence each." She ought to have said—"Glorious, aren't they? They have just arrived from Jersey. Only four shillings a dozen."

That girl was not sold on her own goods. She was shocked at the price. She put her doubts into the minds of her customers. Apparently, she would sooner have sold one rose than a dozen.

A shop assistant must be aware of the value of the goods. Few are. There is a story back of every article in a shop. There are very wonderful and interesting stories.

Is not every large shop a veritable World's Fair, with goods from almost every part of the globe? Is it not an amazingly interesting market, for those who have eyes to see? Are not all the high seas being traversed by ships that are bringing it new merchandize?

As Addison once wrote, in one of the finest of his essays:

"The single dress of a woman of quality is often the product of a hundred climates.

The muff and the fan come together from the different ends of the earth. The scarf is sent from the torrid zone, and the tippet from near the Pole."

Very often, a customer knows more about the goods than the shop assistant does. This does not help the shop. Sometimes customers are leading and merchants are following, with regard to the new things that are constantly being put on the market. A shop assistant's knowledge must be kept up to date. She must know the movements of fashion. She must know " the latest."

Style is becoming the strongest selling point, not only in drapery shops, but in almost all shops. Style has made its way into practically every trade.

There are now brightly coloured pots and pans, Kodaks to match gowns, typewriters in blue, green, red and brown, decorative clocks and watches, artistic lighting fixtures, and all manner of similar things.

There is a wider use of colour and form. It is not enough to-day for a thing to be useful. It is not enough for it to be beautiful. It must be stylish as well.

There is style in motor-cars. There is style

in men's clothing. There is style in fountain pens. In almost everything that people wear and in almost everything that goes in the home, there is style.

Our shop assistants should be notified of this. They should use the style argument wherever it is possible. It not only helps to make the sale, it helps to maintain the price as well.

" Women are fashion hungry," says a wise merchant. They are more interested in style than they have ever been. They scan the advertisements in the daily press to get new fashion hints.

Style is the big maker of sales to-day, not only among the wealthy classes, but among those of moderate means as well. There is a chance for one drapery shop in every town to be known as " the shop that knows the fashions."

Durability does not sell goods, as it did several years ago. Even quality is not enough. Even beauty and colour are not enough. What the average customer wants is style.

To-day every big shop has to have a fashion adviser. Any large shop that is indifferent to

the fashion of the moment will find its customers running to other shops.

When a woman looks in a shop window to-day, what does she look for? In the main, she looks for two things—prices and style. And she looks first for style.

One style suggests another. First, silk stockings came in and became almost universal. This compelled style in ladies' footwear, until to-day ladies' shoes are as decorative as dresses. There is style in jewellery as well as in hats. There is style in overalls as well as in fur coats. There is even style in dogs.

If you want to make your advertising pay you must stop using such words as "durable," "practical," "becoming." Women interpret these words to mean out of date. No woman in these days wants to be dowdy. You must use such words as "smart," "dashing," "new," "chic," "fashionable." Sell style. That's the new formula.

Another new service that the best-managed shops are giving to customers, in this process of SELECTION, is information as to how to take care of the goods. An old-fashioned shop would not do this. It would prefer to

have the customer wear out her goods and buy more. But as we are now reconstructing Salesmanship from the customer's point of view, we must tell them how to make the goods wear longer.

Boot and shoe shops are having large repair departments. Hosiery shops are telling women how to wash stockings. Motor-car agencies are giving all manner of service to their customers.

One large drapery shop is giving a booklet on "HOW TO CARE FOR FURS" to every purchaser in its fur department. This booklet mentions the following ten ways to make furs wear longer :

(1) FRICTION. A fur should not be rubbed by a hat brim or any other hard surface.

(2) SEAM OPENINGS. Even the best fur coats may be torn or the seams may open. These should be repaired at once.

(3) REPAIRS. Always have furs repaired by a reliable firm, and the sooner the better.

(4) SHEDDING. Many good furs will shed hairs.

(5) WEAR OF LININGS. The wear of linings does not mean that the linings are inferior.

(6) KEEP FURS CLEAN. Dirt and dust invite moths. Beat the fur with small sticks and comb now and then.

(7) SHAKING. All furs should be shaken before and after using.

(8) DRYING WET FURS. Moisture injures furs unless they are properly dried. They should be allowed to dry slowly in a draught of cool air.

(9) HEAT AND LIGHT. Furs deteriorate from heat and from too much sunlight.

(10) STORAGE. Furs should be kept in cold storage and should be properly cleansed before being put away.

It is now fairly well agreed that the customer should be given as much information as possible about the goods. This prevents the goods from being returned. It creates a higher appreciation of the goods in the mind of the customer. It justifies the price. And it secures the customer's good-will.

Consequently, every merchant should encourage and reward his shop assistants to learn as much as possible about the goods they are selling. A spirit of dull indifference cannot be tolerated. Customers want information and it must be given to them.

In one progressive furniture shop, where there are forty salesmen, a "STUDY CLUB" has been organized to stimulate the interest and increase the knowledge of the salesmen.

This Club is now running on very original lines. There are no lectures. There is no sitting down. At every meeting there is a competition between two salesmen to see who can prepare the best selection of furniture for a kitchen, bedroom, dining-room, study or drawing-room.

Each salesman is given a week to arrange his room. Then three judges are appointed, and all the salesmen make a study of the two sets of furniture.

The two salesmen are given a chance to explain their exhibit. They are allowed to argue with each other. The salesmen take sides, and there is an exciting time. The winner receives £2 2s. 0d., or a prize given by the firm.

These salesmen are interested in their goods—excited about them—making a game of their job. And the sales have gone up.

In the highest Salesmanship, there is something more, too, than a knowledge of the

goods. There is a love of them—a feeling for them, which a few sales people possess.

This rare quality is the most effective of all during the process of SELECTION. Its effect upon the customer is very evident. It is something finer and more persuasive than information.

A wealthy banker once entered a fashionable jewellery shop and went directly to the diamond counter. The salesman in charge, at his request, brought out a large tray of unset stones, and proceeded to recount the carat, value and history of each jewel.

Presently the banker's interest centred on a large blue-white diamond, exquisitely cut and gleaming like a spark of fire. But the price seemed prohibitive, and though the clerk laboured faithfully enough to make the sale, the banker was about to turn away.

Just then the jeweller himself came along—the man who employed the salesman—and asked for a word in the conversation. He, too, talked diamonds—that was all. But he did it well, reverently. He held the stone to the light, that the banker might look far into its crystal depths. He shadowed it in his palm, revealing new flashes of blue and red

and green. He told the regal story of its travels and adventures. He talked of diamonds as he knew them.

The banker bought the stone. "Why was it," he asked the jeweller, "That you were able to sell me that stone after your salesman had failed?" "Because," the jeweller replied gently, "while my salesman understands diamonds, I love them."

So, as you can see, this process of SELECTION requires many qualities of both head and heart. It calls for all the abilities and social qualities that a salesman can possess. It is no small matter to aid the customer to select the right goods, to teach her to appreciate what she has bought and to send her away happy with the joy of ownership. All this is an essential part of the new Salesmanship.

ADDITION

CHAPTER VI

ADDITION

ADDITION MEANS THAT AFTER THE SALE HAS BEEN MADE, THE SHOP ASSISTANT SHOULD SUGGEST THE BUYING OF SOME OTHER ARTICLE, WHICH HARMONIZES IN SOME WAY WITH THE ARTICLE THAT HAS ALREADY BEEN BOUGHT.

As we have seen, in the previous chapter, the sales person has become an adviser. This makes it possible to offer suggestions to the customer. The customer will not resent this from a sales person who is skilled enough to be a consultant.

It goes without saying that a customer should not be nagged. No one should be pestered to buy. But a skilled shop assistant can do something better than ask formally—" Is there anything else ? " She might say—" This bag is a new style, Madam. It would match the umbrella you have bought very nicely."

Almost all shop assistants are too casual—

too slow-eyed and indifferent. They lose interest in the customer as soon as the sale has been made. This is bad Salesmanship and should be prevented by the training of sales people. As long as a customer is in a shop, there is a chance that she may buy something else.

A shop assistant is not a mere order-taker. A shop is not a warehouse. A customer must not be treated like an errand-boy. New sales may be made by tactful suggestions.

Most goods are bought by the predetermination of the customer, rather than by the sales ability of the shop assistant. The question naturally arises—could not the sales be increased if the sales people were more alert and suggestive ?

Few customers buy all their goods, in any one line, from a single shop. They buy from several grocers and many drapery shops. They buy from small local shops and big department stores. Even the members of the Co-operative Societies spend only an average of £36 per member at their own shops. This proves that any shop can, by the method of ADDITION, persuade customers to buy more.

Mail order firms, by clever advertising, have

greatly increased their sales. Local shopkeepers complain that the same goods might have been bought at home. They might. But they were not brought to the favourable attention of the customer. Often a customer says to a local shopkeeper—" I didn't know that you stocked these goods."

A study was made by the Department of Commerce in America to find out why people do not buy more from the shops in their own town or locality. Such a study had never been made before, and the answers that were given were interesting and instructive. The following seven reasons were given for buying away from home :

	Per cent.
Greater variety of merchandize	30
Newer styles	15
Larger stores . . .	15
Better prices	14
Theatres and other attractions	12
Higher quality goods . .	8
Better store service . .	6

This survey proves that a local shop should do more to call attention to its goods. It is apt to be regarded as only a shop for staples,

whereas it may have many novelties and more varieties than its customers expect.

In most countries, there are now too many small local shops. Roughly speaking, half of the shops do only 5 per cent. of the trade. Thousands of small shops do not take in 30/- a day. Eventually, they are bound to fail.

None can survive unless they learn how to increase their sales. They must close their doors unless they can increase the number of their customers and the number of sales per customer. They are being forced out by the multiple shops and the big department stores, which have more skill in Salesmanship.

There is as great an over-production of retail shops as of factories. The fittest will survive. Every firm stands or falls by its ability to please the customer and to increase its sales. There must be ADDITION or the firm will find itself in the rear or out of the race altogether.

One large drapery shop has greatly increased its sales by preparing a daily sheet of suggestions. One of these is given to each of the shop assistants early in the morning. It gives the names of four or five articles which they

may mention to their customers during the day. Every day there is one very special bargain. It is called a " thunderbolt."

As soon as a customer has finished buying, the shop assistant suggests one of these four or five bargains. Very often, it leads to a sale.

One young lady in the linen department, for instance, made a sale of a gramophone and a Persian rug to a lady who had been buying handkerchiefs only.

But the method of ADDITION, as I teach it, is more effective than this " daily sheet " method. The wisest method of adding to sales is not for a linen sales girl to suggest the buying of rugs or gramophones. She should suggest something else in her department, or something that harmonizes in some way with the goods that have already been bought.

A customer in the linen department who has bought a couple of table-cloths may be shown serviettes to match. Or a customer who has bought one real lace handkerchief may be persuaded to buy another.

Customers resent being shown something that is in another class. If a woman has

bought an umbrella, she may be shown a bag to match it, but she should not be shown a bottle of perfume or a necklace. We are developing a code of etiquette in Salesmanship and it should be known and followed.

A tailor can courteously suggest two pairs of trousers with each suit and his customer will learn to thank him for the wise suggestion. A seedsman can suggest rose trees and new plants for the rockery. A jeweller can suggest the resetting of precious stones. Or a laundry can send a leaflet to its customers, suggesting that they can safely send more woollen and rayon goods to the laundry.

An outfitter has a small card pasted under the glass counter in his hosiery department. It reads as follows :

" It is economy to buy two pairs of hose instead of one. Two pairs save wear."

The shop assistants call attention to this card. They point out that it is not economical to buy one pair of hose at a time. Two pairs of hose that are alike will very likely last as long as three separate pairs of hose. Most customers see the point, and buy two pairs. The sales have gone up twenty per cent. since this card has been in use.

The best customers in the world, I dare say, are the sisal millionaires of Yucatan. They have a national habit of buying every thing in twos—two pianos, two diamond rings, two gramophones and so on. They regard it as a sign of poverty to buy a single article. That is the reason why they are so welcome when they come to buy in Paris and London.

But most of our customers in Europe buy in ones. Often, it would be to their advantage to buy in twos or threes or half-dozens. And it is part of the task of shop assistants to teach them better buying habits.

It is not wise to over-sell a customer, but the fact remains that more customers are UNDER-sold than OVER-sold. Often, a customer goes home and says—"I wish I had bought so-and-so to go with this." Almost all customers want more than they ask for.

One firm which sells motor-car accessories adopted a definite policy of selling by suggestion three years ago. As a result, its sales are now three times larger than they were then. They have made three sales grow where only one sale grew before.

A customer came in to buy a 4/– article.

Before he left the shop he spent more than £10 on other articles. He found that he wanted much more than he had asked for.

Another customer came in to buy a 2/- article, and eventually spent more than three guineas. And so on. The sales people in this shop are instructed to show something else to every customer who comes in.

They are instructed to show something that is suggested by the article that has already been bought. This is following the line of least resistance and the customer does not resent it. This is the true method of ADDITION.

The central point to be remembered, in this matter of ADDITION, is that customers are thinking more and more of the ensemble —the general appearance and effect—all the parts viewed as a whole. This is true with regard to the furnishing of a house and the buying of clothes or jewellery or a number of other things.

When a woman buys an expensive gown, she wants hosiery, shoes, gloves, umbrella, bag, hat and jewellery to match it. When she furnishes a room, she first decides upon a colour scheme and then buys the right rugs, curtains, vases, furniture and pictures.

So, goods come in groups, according to colour, style or period. A customer who buys one article in a group may rightfully have her attention called to other articles in the group.

Women are appreciating harmony and good taste more than they have ever done. They have fashion magazines that instruct them. They are learning not to have a jumble of furniture in a room and not to wear red hats with pink dresses and grey shoes with brown dresses and so on. They are rapidly learning the canons of good taste.

Thousands of women are now going out every day to buy "something to match." They are less colour-blind. They know that one colour can kill another. They are appreciating the importance of the word ensemble. And they should be helped and instructed by the shop assistants.

Every shop assistant who sells clothes, jewellery or house-furnishings should know the colours that harmonize and the colours that clash. Few do. Now that bright colours are coming more and more into fashion, the sales people should be taught the law of colours. They should certainly not know less than many of their customers. They should not suggest inharmonious colours and designs.

Another point that emphasizes the importance of ADDITION is this—every shop to-day is more or less of a novelty shop. The percentage of staple goods is growing less and less.

It follows, then, that customers must be shown the novelties. Sales people must be more alert and suggestive. Salesmanship must be adapted to meet this new situation. Customers do not to-day know what they want nor all they want, as they did years ago.

There must be more team play between the sales people of different departments. As yet, there has been very little. In every large department store there is now the problem—how far can one department help another?

There can be a great deal of co-operation, but it must be arranged by someone who is interdepartmental. It cannot be done by the initiative of the shop assistants themselves. There must be sales experts who look upon the store as a whole and promote co-operation in every possible way.

The latest statistics on shop assistants show that they have a great deal of idle time. They need not, except when there is a queue of

customers, hurry through a sale and dispatch the customer on her way.

The latest figures from America show that the average actual selling time of a shop assistant is only three hours and twenty-one minutes a day. It is only 42 per cent. of the time. Apparently, shop assistants have about two hours of idle time a day, as taking care of the stock does not require more than one-sixth of the time.

This would show that either an average shop could handle 25 per cent. more customers, or that more time might be given to many customers. There is time to show the customer other goods, after the sale has been made. And this can be done, without offending the customer, if the goods shown are naturally suggested by the goods that have been already bought.


COMMENDATION

CHAPTER VII

COMMENDATION

COMMENDATION MEANS THAT AFTER THE SALE HAS BEEN MADE, THE SALES PERSON SHOULD GIVE A WORD OF PRAISE EITHER TO THE GOODS OR TO THE CUSTOMER FOR HAVING MADE A WISE SELECTION. It is the finishing touch of a perfect sale.

A sale should begin and end on a note of friendliness. There should be RECEPTION at the first of it and COMMENDATION at the last of it. This puts the whole sales process on a higher level. It lifts Salesmanship to a higher plane of mutual good-will and courtesy.

The customer deserves a word of approval or congratulation. She has made her choice. She has become a patron of the shop. The shop assistant can at least say—" I'm sure that you will be pleased with that " or " you have made the best possible selection."

All women and most men are pleased if

someone says to them, in other words, " well done, good and faithful buyer." Everyone craves approval. A woman hopes for a word of praise from her family circle when she goes home and exhibits what she has bought. Sometimes she does not get it. So, she should get it at the shop, at any rate. When a customer goes out feeling that she has been wise and fortunate—that she has secured a prize, she is likely to become a regular customer of that shop.

It is an axiom of human nature that everyone loves praise, and praise costs nothing—nothing but a friendly feeling of consideration for the feelings of others and a courteous desire to please them.

Every head has a bump of Approbativeness. Very few people, if any, are wholly indifferent to the opinions of others. We prefer to be liked. We enjoy praise and we dislike blame. Praise is woven into the very fabric of our social life. It is an essential element of courtesy.

If this be true, then why not praise customers ? Why should a sale be followed, as it often is, by a sudden aloofness on the part of the sales person ? Why should conversation

stop as soon as the sale is finished? Why should a sudden dumbness fall upon the shop assistant as soon as the article has been bought?

Sometimes a shop assistant shows a feeling of relief after a sale, as though an ordeal were over. It is as though she were thinking—"at last, that's over. Thank Heaven, I've god rid of those goods." This is noticed by the customer and it is not a good thing for the shop. Often, a customer thinks when she is going out of the shop—"I'm not sure that I have bought the right thing."

On an average, one article out of every twenty-five, bought in drapery shops, is brought back. Might not this 4 per cent. of goods returned be reduced if there were a word of COMMENDATION after the sale has been made? Very likely.

It does not appear necessary to many shop assistants to praise the goods after the sale has been made. But it is. The customer is more likely to be impressed by one word AFTER the sale than by a hundred words BEFORE the sale. It removes any doubt in the customer's mind as to the quality of the goods, and it is an evidence of the sincerity of the shop assistant.

A word of COMMENDATION proves a personal interest in the customer. It makes her feel that she is not being regarded merely as a buyer, but as one who is receiving a sincere personal service—as one who is welcomed and highly regarded.

How does the customer feel when she leaves the counter? That is the test question of a perfect sale. If she was dismissed with an indifferent nod, she remembers it. She must go out happily if the shop wants to prosper.

Always, the question is—will the customer come again? Or will she put the name of the shop on her mental Black List? Every customer has a list of "Never Again" shops. And usually a shop is put on this list, not because its goods are inferior nor over-priced, but because of the defective service that has been received from the shop assistants.

There can never be too many little extra unexpected courtesies in any shop. The shop assistant who does and says only what she is compelled to do, is not worthy of a place behind a counter. A shop must be noticeably courteous. It must have many little surprises. These are trifles. But they are the trifles that make perfection.

One Bond Street tailor—Rowe—has a pleasant little shop-habit which might well be imitated by others. On every bill a gummed slip is pasted containing the following two paragraphs :

" The assistant who attended to your instructions has a complete record of all essential details for future use, and shares our hope that the purchase and service gave you complete satisfaction.

" You may be assured of the same personal interest and care in any further purchase or enquiry if you would kindly make use of the attached slip, or mention the attendant by name."

This notice is signed by the name of the salesman who waited on the customer. The value of this idea is that it prevents the sale from being anonymous. It creates a slight amount of personal interest. It elevates and humanizes the whole transaction. And the value of it is that it comes after the sale, not before.

Even in the wrapping of the parcel, there may be some little extra courtesy or skill. If the customer is carrying several other parcels, the shop assistant may say—" May I make them all into one parcel for you, Madam ? "

There is skill required in the wrapping up of goods. Very few shop assistants have been taught how to wrap a parcel correctly. Parcel-wrapping is like cabinet-making—it depends upon tight corners. The way to judge any parcel is by looking at the corners.

The first thing to notice is the size of the paper. It is usually too large. This is a waste of paper, and one way of spoiling the parcel.

The main thing in putting the paper around the goods is to push the paper out tightly at each side. Think of the corners. The middle will take care of itself.

Almost all shop assistants push the paper down in the middle and neglect the corners. The result is a messy package. The string, too, should be pulled tight at every turn, and a secure knot should be tied. Neat tidy parcels are much appreciated by customers.

Skill and good manners! These are what make the good reputation of a shop. Few shops have goods that are unique. The difference in shops is mainly in the quality of the service that is being given to the customers.

The aim of an efficient shop is not to deliver the goods and get the money. The

aim is to serve the customer well and to create a pleasant impression upon her mind. This should never be forgotten. It is the test of all Salesmanship.

If a shop can create a reputation for friendliness, it will have no lack of customers. In almost every town there is a friendly chemist and a friendly grocer and a friendly outfitter. These are the men who spend the least to get new customers and who keep those they have. They go through life with the least friction and the most profit. Often, they build up the largest businesses.

People go where they feel in touch with the place. They are kept away by dignity, aloofness and indifference. Rabbits run to the thicket. Wild ducks to the marsh. Eagles to the tops of the mountains. Every living thing seeks its own best environment. And customers are no exception to the rule. They go where they are made to feel at home.

The little extra courtesy—how much it is! And how long we remember it. A number of years ago, I was staying over-night at a big hotel in Philadelphia—the Bellevue-Stratford.

I had a lot of bothersome business that kept me working till 10 p.m. When I went to my

room I was out of sorts. I picked up my telephone and growled :

" This is Room 746. Call me at 7."

A sweet voice came back over the 'phone— " Room 746. To be called at 7. Good-night ! "

" Good-night ! " It was just one little word extra and what a difference it made. At once, my bad temper vanished. I began to whistle and sing and smile to myself.

It may seem a small matter, but although I have been living in hotels for half of my lifetime, I never had that happen before. I have never been in that hotel since, but I have never forgotten it and never shall. It is one of my high and shining spots, in the midst of the lowlands of trade and commerce. That little last word of courtesy !

So, to sum up, Salesmanship is the art of liking people and helping them to buy what will please them. The RIDSAC FORMULA does not create a new procedure. It only points out definitely what is always done by a skilled and friendly salesman. It points out that there is such a thing as the technique of courtesy and that the selling of an article is a little social event. It should be begun by RECEPTION and ended by COMMENDATION.

AUTOMATIC SELLING MACHINES

Chapter VIII

AUTOMATIC SELLING MACHINES, SELF-SERVE SHOPS AND LEASED DEPARTMENTS

THE three most noticeable developments in the selling of goods are the following :

(1) The use of Automatic Selling Machines.

(2) The Increase in the Number of Self-Serve Shops.

(3) The Leasing of Departments in Large Stores to Outside Firms.

These three developments began in the United States and they are now being adopted in Europe. They are in my opinion all reactionary. They do not mark steps in advance in the evolution of Salesmanship. They mean that Salesmanship is being brought to a lower

level. Merchants are endeavouring to make their work simpler and easier, instead of learning the technique of selling goods in the most efficient way.

There may be certain wise uses of these new machines and methods, but they do not solve the problem of Salesmanship. All three are now being carried too far in America. If they are to be used in Europe, they must be carefully studied and kept in their proper places.

In America, almost every new idea is invariably carried too far. It is regarded as a panacea for all ills. It is always overdone. Then there comes a swing back in the opposite direction. America is a land of booms and slumps. There is prosperity and wreckage, both. We are not so apt to go to extremes.

As to automatic selling machines, there has been a boom in Europe, as well as in America, in the creation of companies that make or sell these machines. Apparently, a wave of automatic selling is coming in.

There are now, in 1929, about 100,000 of these machines in use in America. Of these, 30,000 are used for selling postage stamps. They sell 120,000,000 stamps a year.

It is said that, judging from advanced orders, there will be 1,500,000 of these machines in use in America in five years.

The nickname of these machines is " robot salesmen." They have become very popular. They are now being used to sell shaving soap, hair tonic, camera films, handkerchiefs, chocolates and cigarettes. They will do all the " mechanical selling " and enable a customer to serve himself quickly.

An interesting experiment is now being made by the United Cigar Company in the United States. This company has a large number of tobacconist shops. About a year ago this company discovered that its shop assistants were doing 60 per cent. automatic work and 40 per cent. of actual selling.

So, the company decided that it was a waste of time and money to allow shop assistants to do the work of slot machines. It selected one of its busiest shops and put in a number of slot machines. Also, it put in machines that gave change.

At first, each slot machine averaged 800 sales per day. But when the novelty wore off the sales amounted to only 400 per day. This is supposed to be a fair average. It has

been found that the use of slot machines relieves the salesmen of automatic work and gives them more time to make the larger and more profitable sales.

Every machine holds enough merchandize to make 100 sales. When the salesmen are not rushed with business, they refill the machines. One machine sells a packet of cigarettes for 9d. and also gives 3d. in change. Also, it gives every customer matches and a coupon.

It seems that most men who go into a tobacconist's shop are in a hurry. They want to be waited on quickly. Now that there are slot machines in the shop they can wait on themselves at once. The customers seem to appreciate this.

Since the machines were put in, sales have increased. The salesmen have so much more selling time that they can afford to wait on their customers better. Many customers, too, after they have bought a packet of cigarettes from a machine, go and buy other things at the counter.

It has not been found possible to sell cigars in a slot machine. A customer buys a cigar because of its shape, size and colour. He

prefers to pick out his own cigars. A slot machine would be apt to give a customer a box of cigars which would not suit his fancy.

The company believes that these slot machines should not be put in every shop. Some shops are not large enough for them. They have not enough floor space. Also, there are some shops where the business is spread out evenly over the day. It is only in those shops in which there is a rush period that these machines would prove valuable.

This, as you can see, is an experiment. Already, it has been found out that the sales by the machines fall off 50 per cent. as soon as they cease to be a novelty. It may be found later on that people prefer to have personal attention and there may be a loss of customers which make the use of the vending machines unprofitable.

The fact seems to be that automatic selling is successful when nothing but speed is required. It can be used in the selling of Underground tickets, chewing gum, stamps, matches, etc.

The increase in the sale of packaged goods has given the makers of automatic machines a strong talking point. But packaged goods

should not make Salesmanship unnecessary. Merchandize should not be sold like Underground tickets. There is no chance for RECEPTION, INQUIRY, DISPLAY, SELECTION, ADDITION nor COMMENDATION when customers buy from a machine.

Vending machines give shop assistants a wrong idea of the nature of Salesmanship. It should be personal—more and more PERSONAL. A shop should not lose personal contact with its customers.

The mechanical idea is to treat customers as a mob. The personal idea is to individualize every customer as far as possible. An arcade of vending machines is not a shop. It may prove to be interesting as a novelty for a time, but the novelty will soon be gone and customers will go to shops where they are treated as people, not as Robots.

The less automatic a sale is, the better. Nothing can take the place of skilled, friendly, personal service, to build up the trade and good-will of a shop.

There is too much automatic selling now, on the part of shop assistants. There are too many human machines behind the counter.

There are too many stony-faced price-tellers, who do little more than a machine can do.

In many shops, and in the ticket offices of many theatres and railway stations, there are sales people who sell mechanically, without one unnecessary motion or word. If buyers ask questions, they are snapped at, as though it were bad form to talk.

It would, no doubt, be profitable to put in vending machines to take the place of these automatic sales people, but it would be better still to train them to treat buyers courteously. It is better to improve the Salesmanship of a company than to totally abolish it.

As to self-serve shops, they have made a rather brilliant start in the United States. But it must be remembered that everything new succeeds for a time in America, and that the unfavourable news is not generally made known. This much we know, that one large chain of self-serve shops—the Piggly-Wiggly stores—failed and had to be reorganized. Evidently, the self-serve method is not a sure road to success.

It has been proved that, at first, in a new self-serve shop, the sales are greatly increased.

One self-serve grocery in Elmira, U.S.A., sold £200 of groceries the first day. It was a small shop, and had to be filled up three times during the day. The owner of this shop has recently started three others in the same town. The largest is 40 by 120 feet.

One department store in Wilkes-Barre has just made its first report. It became a self-serve shop one year ago. On its opening day the sales went up 500 per cent. Instead of 150 sales girls, there are now only forty cashiers, supervisors and inspectors.

This firm gives no credit, allows no discounts, makes no alterations, has no C.O.D.'s, accepts no telephone orders and sends no goods on approval. It has reduced its overhead charges to one-half of what they were.

One self-serve grocery in Rochester is now doing a business of £100,000 a year ; so it is evident that self-serve shops need not be small ones only. This grocery has a stock worth £4,000, and has only eleven employees. No credit is given and no goods are delivered. The overhead charges are less than 7 per cent. of sales.

A self-serve drapery and shoe shop in Rochester is now doing a business of £150,000

a year, with seven cashiers, three buyers and sixteen supervisors. As many as 1,500 pairs of shoes have been sold in one day.

Another self-serve drapery shop has been started by the W. A. McNaughton Company, Muncie, U.S.A. The entire basement of the shop is being used for this purpose. Special entrance wickets and exit wickets have been put in at the foot of the stairs. Shelves have been removed and merchandise bins put in their place.

Dress goods are of various lengths, from three yards up. Every article has to be taken as it is, without alteration. Price tickets are attached with wire, made secure with a lead seal.

The rules of this self-serve basement are :

No lift-service ; no deliveries ; no goods on approval ; no goods exchanged after two days.

On the walls and pillars are the following signs :

SEEING IS BUYING.

SERVE AND SAVE.

CARRY HOME AND SAVE DELAY.

ASK THE USHER TO FIND WHAT YOU WANT.

GOODS SOLD SO CHEAP WE CAN'T AFFORD SHOP ASSISTANTS.

Some American store-keepers are using the self-serve method to attract people to Sales. They run on self-serve methods for a week. This, of course, is not a genuine self-serve experiment, as all the shop assistants are on hand to assist the customers.

One American clothier reports having had a great success with several of these Self-Serve Sales. His shop was packed on each occasion for a whole week, and his sales were five times greater than they have ever been with any other kind of a Sale.

The goods are all laid out neatly on tables and counters. The customers select the goods for themselves. All goods are sold for cash. No goods are returnable and none are delivered. A customer selects the garment he wants, carries it to the cashier, pays for it, has it wrapped, and carries it away with him.

At one of these sales, the crowd was so great that the shop had to be closed for an hour at noon until the shop assistants could arrange the goods.

During these sales no goods are placed in the windows. The windows are filled with bulletins, placards and prices. As a sale of this kind greatly reduces expenses, the goods are marked down very low. There is a very strong price inducement to buy.

One of the best features of these sales is that they attract a very large number of new customers. The novelty of the sales and the low prices attract customers from a distance.

Special announcements of every sale are sent to all regular customers in advance, and fairly large advertisements are put in the daily papers. As the sale proceeds the size of the advertisements is reduced.

No special difficulties have arisen in regard to these sales. They have been found to attract a great deal of attention. People seem to like the freedom of picking out garments for themselves. So far as the firm can find out, there has been very little theft.

However, the question arises—what is the effect of these Self-Serve Sales upon the regular customers? Does the volume of business decrease on the week following one of these Sales? Is it difficult to restore prices

to their normal level ? What is the effect upon the reputation of the shop ? And what is the effect upon the shop assistants ? As you can see, these are serious questions that must be faced, before we can know the net value of the self-serve method.

The self-serve idea is not entirely new. There has been a self-serve restaurant in New York for over thirty years. It is one of a large chain of restaurants, and the others have not been made self-serving. It has never been remarkably profitable nor popular. There has been one, too, in Berlin for twenty years, which serves hot meals mechanically, but it has never been so successful as to create competitors.

The facts seem to show that self-serve shops attract only certain classes of customers. They are preferred by people in a hurry, and by bargain-hunters and novelty-seekers. They are merchandizing curiosities. And the great fact remains that most customers prefer to have the personal attention of waiters and shop assistants.

As to the leasing of departments in large department stores to outsiders, this has now become a very common thing in the United States.

Out of 88 big shops in New York, 57 lease their millinery departments, 53 lease beauty parlours and 33 lease shoe departments.

About 20 per cent. of the big New York shops lease their sweets departments, 18 per cent. their optical departments, and 15 per cent. their pattern departments. One-fourth of the shops have more than five departments leased out.

All told, there are 51 kinds of departments under lease. There are even three ready-made clothing departments held on lease.

The rent paid is usually based on sales. A millinery department is leased for 15 per cent. ; a beauty parlour for from 15 to 20 per cent. ; a shoe department for 10 per cent. In some cases there is a sliding scale. The lessee pays a smaller percentage as his sales increase.

This is doubtless a practical idea if a merchant finds that his shop is too big for his capital. But it transforms a big shop into an Arcade. It becomes a street instead of a shop.

A certain New York merchant was, I believe, the originator of the plan of leasing departments. He adopted it because he had built a large shop and found it wiser to lease depart-

ments than to borrow more money. It was a temporary expedient rather than a permanent policy. He had for a time more space than he could use.

To sum up, these three new methods of selling goods—vending machines, self-serve shops and leased departments, are departures from good Salesmanship. All three are apt to fail in securing the loyalty and good-will of customers.

All three are an attempt to economize—to pay less to shop assistants. Like many other well-known efforts to economize, they may prove costly in the long run. The one supreme fact to consider is the effect upon the mind of the customer and the reputation of the shop for courteous personal service.

The sales people in a leased department are apt to force goods upon customers. They are usually paid on commission and they are prone to over-sell. They cannot be expected to think of the welfare of the shop as a whole. And they are not easy to supervise, as they are paid by an outside firm.

It comes to this, that a store-keeper cannot escape his duties and his responsibilities by

these three methods nor by any others. If he tries to escape them, the Balance Sheet will eventually tell a tale of losses.

There must be better Salesmanship. There must be more service of customers, not less. There must be shop assistants who know how to do what they are paid for. There must be an attempt to win the friendship and loyalty of customers. This is the right road that does not lead to a dead end. It is the way to build up a prosperous and permanent business.

PREVENTION OF PRICE CUTTING

CHAPTER IX

THE PREVENTION OF PRICE-CUTTING

AS a natural result of our ignorance of Salesmanship, and of our amateurish practice of selling on price, there has come a flood of price-cutting. Merchants and manufacturers alike have entered into a cut-throat competition, each trying to ruin the other.

This has become a great national evil. It is almost universal. It has ruined firms. It has wrecked whole trades. It has brought a whole section of the cotton trade to the verge of bankruptcy. And it has almost wiped out the profits of the iron and steel trade.

The trades that know the least about Salesmanship have suffered the most. This proves that a knowledge of Salesmanship can do much to prevent price-cutting.

Thousands of firms are now sliding helplessly down to bankruptcy because they did not know the right answer to this question—when you are overstocked with goods, what then ?

The right answer is not Price-Cutting. It is the usual answer. Why ? Because it is the easiest solution of the problem.

It doesn't require any brains to cut prices of standard goods in daily demand. If an article is honestly worth 10/–, do not slash it down to 8/–. Remember, too, that when you mark a 10/– article for sale at 8/–, you admit, in effect, either that the article was not worth 10/– or that you haven't the ability to get its true market value in competition with your fellows. And, further, by cutting the price you immediately place upon the article a lower value.

Price-cutting is business suicide. It is not business at all. Business means selling goods at a profit, not at a loss. There is a certain shop in London that has for three years been cutting prices. It now has a sign up : " Going out of business." How can it go out ? It never was in. It has never known any of the rules of profit-making business.

Persistent price-cutting is always a sign of incompetence or sheer laziness. All of us must cut prices at times. But it should always be a last resort to rid one's stock only of otherwise unsaleable goods.

Sometimes a retreating army must wreck its guns and blow up its fortifications. But it should only do this when every other method has failed. It should not make a habit of it.

Price-cutting is always dangerous. It is like taking cocaine. You begin with a little, and you take more and more. Eventually, it kills you.

Here are four facts to remember :

(1) Price-cutting seldom increases sales sufficiently to make up for the loss in profits. If you have a 25 per cent. mark up, and if you reduce the price 5 per cent., you must increase sales 18¾ per cent. to make the same amount of money. If you cut your price 15 per cent., you must sell 112½ per cent. more goods.

(2) Price-cutting leads to handling a poorer quality of goods. It leads downwards to the Trash line. It leads to Rubbish Sales. Every tradesman knows that. When you have lost all your profit, you ask the manufacturer to

lose some of his. Does he ? Or does he give you a lower quality article ?

(3) Price-cutting leads to a loss of the wealthiest customers. One well-to-do customer is worth a dozen bargain-hunters. Cheapsters attract cheapsters. The shop that sets out to catch pennies will soon be known as a catch-penny shop.

(4) Price-cutting is easy, but price restoration is hard. One cut leads to another. The sales people become demoralized. They become price-tellers. They weaken when they are asked to sell goods at profitable prices. If they cannot say "Reduced," they do not know what else to say.

So, what is the right answer to this question —when you are overstocked with goods, what then ? Here are several answers and every one of them is a better answer than price-cutting :

(1) BETTER WINDOW DISPLAYS.

It is better to spend £10 on your window displays than to lose £10 by price-cutting. Eye-catching devices can now be bought, and they are well worth buying.

Do not make your windows a mere sample-case. Put in something different, to compel

passers-by to stop. Put a boy or a girl in the window, at work in some way on the goods. Nothing else is as attractive as this.

Any shopkeeper who learns how to make the best use of his windows, and who will alter his display each week, will seldom have any necessity to cut prices. And by degrees he will build up a sound business for standard-priced lines.

(2) USE QUALITY-CARDS INSTEAD OF CUT-PRICE CARDS.

Take more pains with your window-cards. Put in special cards with a few words or phrases describing the goods. Call attention to the quality, rather than the price.

(3) GIVE SAMPLES TO CUSTOMERS.

You cannot do this if you are selling gowns, but you can if you are selling confectionery. Say to customers—"Try one of these. You will like the flavour."

Above all else, you must please customers, and so induce them to come again. The customer who comes back is the one who makes your shop prosper.

(4) BUY FROM THE MANUFACTURER WHO

TAKES AN INTEREST IN YOU AND HELPS YOU TO SELL YOUR GOODS.

Some manufacturers are wise enough to take a keen interest in their retailers. They help them with window displays. They supply fancy cards and display devices. They do their best to prevent retailers from being obliged to cut prices.

(5) BRIGHTEN UP YOUR ADVERTISING.

Make your advertising more conversational and put more enthusiasm in it. Always write the headlines from the point of view of the customers. And put in longer descriptions of the goods.

(6) TEACH THE SALES PEOPLE THE QUALITIES OF THE GOODS.

Most shop assistants do not know what they are selling. The one thing that they all know is the price. The buyer of the goods should pass on his knowledge of the goods to the people who have to do the selling.

Often, if a customer asks, "What's the difference?" when she is looking at an 8/- article and a 10/- article, the shop assistant says "2/-." What is the use of that?

If the sales people are not taught to appreciate the quality of a higher-priced article, how can the customer be convinced of it?

(7) GIVE SOME EXTRA SERVICE TO CUSTOMERS.

Give them some little extra courtesy or service that they did not expect. This may be a quicker delivery, or a guarantee that anything will be taken back if it is not satisfactory, or free shopping bags, or a place to put prams, or little gifts for babies, or a courteous girl at the door. Do every possible thing to send every customer away pleased, and you will not lose many sales because of your normal prices.

(8) MAKE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO REACH NEW CUSTOMERS WHO CAN AFFORD TO PAY FAIR PRICES FOR QUALITY GOODS.

Have at least a few articles in the window that are of the highest quality. Many well-to-do people, who are most desirable as customers, will pass your shop by if it contains nothing but the low-priced goods.

Put out some bait to catch the big fish. Many shops, in good neighbourhoods, make the mistake of trying to sell goods that are below the neighbourhood standard. Many

shopkeepers could sell better goods than they have ever dared to sell, but they suffer from the delusion that they can catch people only by low prices.

(9) TEACH THE SALES PEOPLE THE ART OF SALESMANSHIP.

This must be done, if you are determined to maintain prices and to continue to sell the higher-priced goods.

Teach them to welcome customers—to greet them with a look of recognition. Teach them to ask questions of the customers as to their particular desires, and take a personal interest in what the customers want. Teach them never to mention price until quality has been mentioned. Tell the price last, not first.

If you tell the price before you describe the quality, all higher-priced goods will seem dear. But once you have pointed out the quality, the price will seem low enough.

So, as you can see, price-cutting is not as necessary as many of us think. We can get a fair profit on our goods, and we can increase our sales as well, if we go at the job of selling in earnest and make the most of our opportunities.

Always, the last thing, not the first, is to sacrifice profits. The first duty of every business man is to maintain prices at such a level that he will not destroy himself as well as injure his competitors. The basis of all business is a fair net profit upon goods sold.

All the above suggestions require an intelligent and well-trained sales force. They cannot be carried out by an awkward squad of amateurs. That leads us to the task of STAFF TRAINING. It is so important that it requires a chapter to itself.

STAFF TRAINING

Chapter X

STAFF TRAINING FOR SALES PEOPLE

VERY few firms in Great Britain take Staff Training seriously. Very few engage competent teachers or venture to train the older members of their sales force.

It is regarded as being necessary only for beginners. It is not appreciated as a means of preventing cut prices, increasing sales, decreasing costs and creating good-will in the minds of customers.

Once, an eminent London merchant protested to me that he had a Staff Training School for his shop assistants. I went to see it. It was in a remote attic at the top of an old building. Here I found a forlorn and neglected instructor, who was not a skilled salesman himself, teaching arithmetic to a class of eleven young girls. To call this kind of thing Staff Training is silly trifling.

There are spurious Staff Trainers, too, who sell their so-called services to firms at a low price. There are make-believe "Colleges" and "Institutes." There are catchpenny imitators. There always are. Now and then there are even catchpenny banks and investment trusts.

Staff Training is important and difficult. It cannot be done by any glib talker. It should not be confined to beginners. It can be done either by a specialist in the employ of the firm or by an outside specialist. It is a job that requires a high degree of skill and experience. And it is well worth what it costs, if it is done well.

Staff Training for sales people must be practical and definite. It must not be a series of "pep" talks or inspirational lectures only. It must not be the stale exhortation to "sell more goods." It must be more than the fixing of "quotas" and the goading and pricking of sales people.

The fact is, as this book points out, that most sales people DO NOT KNOW HOW TO SELL. Of what use is it to say to them—"Come on. Beat last week's record. Win a prize. Put your sales up." This ceaseless cracking of the

whip without any definite instruction demoralizes a sales force. It is not what is meant by Staff Training.

How many sales people know the nature of the sales process and the six elements that compose it? How many could tell the RIDSAC FORMULA or any Formula at all? How many have a clear idea of what they are required to do? Not many.

A shop must have the right goods and skilled sales people. It must have the stuff and the staff. If it must choose between the two, it had better have ordinary goods and exceptional sales people than the reverse.

It must, in a word, have professionals instead of amateurs. The great mass of sales people are amateurs. They have had no definite training at all. This is an amazing fact and shows how far we have yet to go before we lift the selling of goods up to the level of the professions.

A progressive shop is a School. Everyone in it is learning. There are few petrified people in it who believe that they know Salesmanship from A to Z. They expect to go on learning as long as they live.

One of the best results of Staff Training is

to all the others. The workers, for all manner of silly reasons, look down on each other.

Every man is trying to make it appear that he is more important than the other men; and as for the Board of Directors—it is a House of Lords. It is a place of privacy and dignity. It strikes the keynote of "class," and the whole firm is spoiled by it.

If only directors would mingle with the managers and walk about among the workers —if only they would act like men and not like stage Napoleons, many of our industrial problems would disappear.

So, here is where the value of Staff Training comes in. In a Staff Circle, as we call it, the directors and managers and foremen and salesmen are all together in one class.

They are all together as learners, not as swankers. The class feeling is abolished. The departmentalism is broken down. The mutual dislike is changed into mutual respect and goodwill.

After a Staff Circle has been running for several months the little jealousies and frictions disappear; and there is a general desire to learn and to be helpful to each other.

that the employees learn how to teach one another, which they have never been trained to do.

For instance, in a shop, the buyers should tell the shop assistants as much as possible about the new goods. Then, the shop assistants in their turn, should tell the buyers what the customers think. The advertising man and the window dresser should be in touch with the buyers. In fact, everybody should tell everybody else anything that is to the advantage of the shop.

All the way through, business is largely TEACHING. You teach people to desire your product—that is selling. You teach workers how to make the right product—that is manufacturing. You teach employees to co-operate with you—that is organization. All the way along, in the life of an efficient business man, he is first and foremost a teacher.

The greatest value of Staff Training to a firm is that it creates a company feeling—a spirit of co-operation and service.

The fact is that most firms are full of snobbery and departmentalism. Every manager, more or less, considers himself superior

to all the others. The workers, for all manner of silly reasons, look down on each other.

Every man is trying to make it appear that he is more important than the other men; and as for the Board of Directors—it is a House of Lords. It is a place of privacy and dignity. It strikes the keynote of "class," and the whole firm is spoiled by it.

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After a Staff Circle has been running for several months the little jealousies and frictions disappear; and there is a general desire to learn and to be helpful to each other.

There is a vast difference between Staff Training and the ordinary university training. Staff Training is not culture. It does not pretend to be. It gives a man an edge, not a polish.

It prepares him for work rather than for leisure. It makes him useful, not ornamental. It develops him into a full-fledged human being, not into a piece of bric-a-brac.

It puts him in touch with the other members of his firm. That is where it differs from the old-fashioned classical education, which put a man out of touch with everybody except his own set.

A Staff Training Course soon calls attention to the great differences in sales people. Some learn quickly and some cannot learn at all. A few sales people are born with a gift for Salesmanship, just as there are a few people who can play the piano without having taken any lessons.

An Association of twenty-one motor-car dealers made a study of their salesmen, and found out some interesting facts. They found that, of salesmen selling high-priced cars, 59 per cent. made 83 per cent. of the sales.

Of these high-class salesmen, all had been with their firms for more than a year.

Of salesmen selling medium and low-priced cars, 24 per cent. of the salesmen made 56 per cent. of the sales, and all were men of more than one year's experience.

The two best salesmen sold as many cars as the eighteen worst salesmen. This would show that it takes nine bad salesmen to make one good one. The salesmen working on straight commission sold the greatest number of cars, and those on salary sold the fewest.

This proves that a skilled salesman is worth nine times as much as an amateur. Scores of Sales Managers and Salesmen in the United States are now being paid £4,000 a year and more. They earn it. They are professionals. They are creative. They are customer-finders. They open up new markets. They maintain prices. They are highly profitable to their firms.

It has been proved, too, that young sales people, well trained, can sell more goods than older sales people who are only self-trained by experience.

A certain manufacturer once made an

experiment in Staff Training. He has a factory and a retail shop. It is an old-established shop. Its sales people had never been trained in any special way. They had just picked up their knowledge, or ignorance, of Salesmanship from one another.

This manufacturer took six young men and had them thoroughly trained in salesmanship. Then he put them in the factory for three months until they knew all about the goods. Then he put them as salesmen in his retail shop.

Result—these six trained salesmen, who had never been in a retail shop before, sold more goods in the first three months than any other six sales people in the shop. They beat veterans who had been in the shop for 25 years. One of them beat all previous records in selling.

They had three advantages:

(1) They were young. They had enthusiasm.

(2) They had been trained in salesmanship.

(3) They knew the goods, because they had seen the process of making them.

Almost any merchant would be stunned if he knew what his unskilled, low-paid sales people cost him, in errors, in loss of sales and loss of customers and loss of reputation. Cheap sales people always cost far more than their wages. One girl, who is paid 20/- a week, may cost the firm £200 a year because of her ignorance and her mistakes.

A merchant once made an investigation to find out the number of errors that were being made, and how much they were costing. He was very much surprised at what it found.

He found that 40 quite competent sales people made 157 mistakes in 16 weeks. These errors varied from a halfpenny to £3 10s. Even the oldest salesman made mistakes which amounted to £1 13s.

The average error was 1d. per sale. At this rate a shop assistant who makes 80 sales a day would, in a year's time, have made errors amounting to £100.

Another merchant, one day, had a fit of curiosity. He wondered how much trouble and expense were caused by an error—the sort of error that is happening almost every hour in most big shops.

He made an investigation. He picked out one error—a girl had written the wrong address upon a sales slip. A small matter. So it seemed at first glance. But the merchant spent an hour or two looking up the consequences of this error.

He found that it had wasted the time of 35 people. It had cost not less than 26/–. The value of the goods sold was 10/–. The sale had been lost. Also, very likely, the customer had been lost. And all because a girl wrote Judson Street, instead of Johnston Street.

A merchant cannot make any more profits than his employees will let him. His profits are pulled down by their carelessness and their lack of skill. No matter how clever he may be —no matter how much capital he may have, his profits depend, in the long run, upon the efficiency and courtesy of his sales people.

It has been found that the average shop loses 15 per cent. of its customers every year. One out of every seven drops out. This is the most serious loss that any shop can have.

Never before has there been as much danger of losing customers as there is to-day. What with full-page advertisements and Sales, customers are now running about more than they

ever did. It is very difficult to hold them. At the slightest discourtesy they go elsewhere.

One very successful merchant has a meeting of his shop assistants every month. One month he came into the meeting and asked this question—" How many customers did you kill yesterday ? "

Then he went on to explain. He said : " When a customer comes in here with a complaint, she is wounded. If you treat her discourteously, or suspiciously, and cause her to leave the store feeling dissatisfied, she is dead so far as we are concerned. She is worse than dead, for the chances are that she will not only not come back, but that she will tell tales about us that no dead person could tell. She will tell tales which will prevent some of her friends from coming here.

" So," he continued, " the point that I want to make is that a person who brings a complaint here is wounded. She needs sympathy and first aid. It is up to you to see that she gets it. Never, under any circumstances, run the risk of killing a valuable customer."

It is undeniably true that just because of inexcusable rudeness and lack of skill on the

part of sales people, thousands of customers walk out every day. If Staff Training would prevent a third of this loss of trade, it would add greatly to the profits and reputation of the shop.

Staff Training more than pays for itself, too, by reducing the cost of supervision. The untrained, the ignorant, the careless, the irresponsible require constant oversight. They use the time of the skilled and well-paid people above them. Because they cost the company so much for supervision their wages have to be low. And the firm makes very little profit on their labour.

It costs much less to pay for instruction than for supervision. Instruction means the prevention of errors, while supervision usually means noticing the error after it has been committed. Also, instruction creates a spirit of good-will and loyalty, while supervision creates discontent.

Staff Training enables a firm to spend less on advertising, and yet to hold its own against its competitors. One of the large drapery shops of London has so thoroughly trained its sales people that it does not spend a penny on

advertising and it is one of the busiest shops in London.

It is worth noticing that the one large department store in the United States which has spent the most money on Staff Training—John Wanamaker's, has become one of the great shops of the world, with 17,000 employees. The Wanamaker shop went so far as to have a special text-book prepared for every department—for eighty departments in all. And no shop assistant is allowed to sell goods without first studying the text-book of the department.

In Great Britain, the firm of Austin Reed, Ltd., has had a text-book prepared for its sales people. This book gives information as to the quality of the goods, and instructions as to the treatment of customers.

As you can see, this sort of instruction is of the highest practical value. It educates amateurs until they become professionals. It lifts Staff Training up to a high plane. It teaches sales people HOW TO SELL.

The fact is that every sales person represents the whole firm and helps to make or mar the firm's reputation. And the time has come

when every merchant must take Staff Training seriously, if he wishes to hold and to increase his trade.

Now that you have come to the end of this book, you can see that Salesmanship has its technique. It has its laws. It has its FORMULA. There is such a thing as UP-TO-DATE SALESMANSHIP and it cannot safely be ignored.

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